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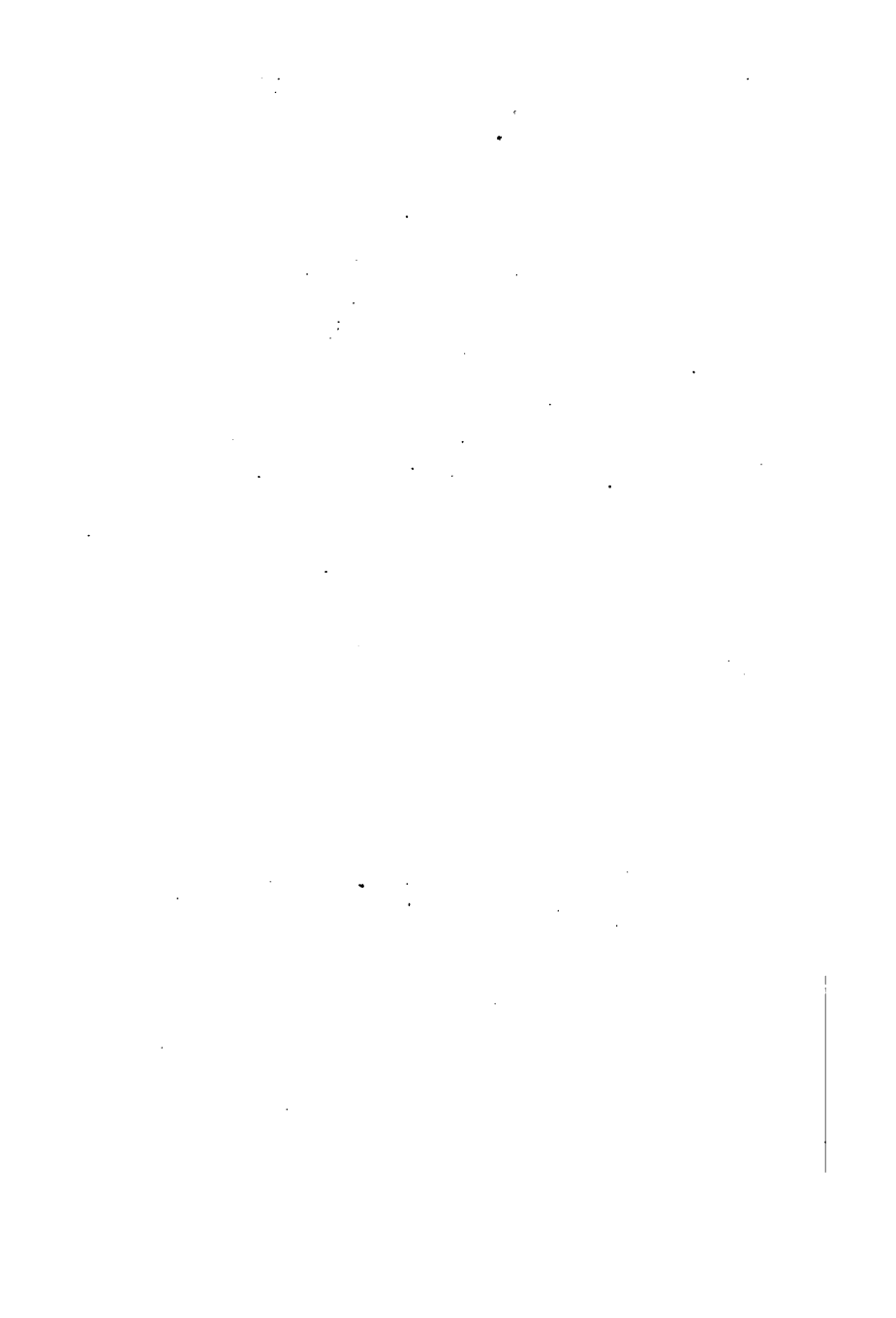


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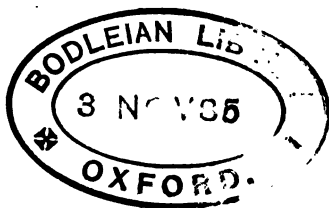
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PREFACE.



IN the Stories from English History here offered for the use of the Fourth Standard of our public elementary schools, the effort of the writer has been to present as clearly and as simply as he could, not merely the bare incidents of the history, but the social and political lessons to be drawn from them. These, it cannot be doubted, may be impressed upon the youngest minds; and the children who have mastered these simple tales will not, it is believed, be perplexed if they should hereafter enter upon researches on a larger scale.

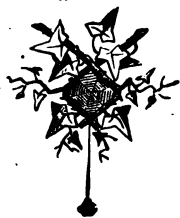


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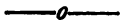
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STORIES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.



DUKE ROBERT.

Duke Robert joins the Crusaders—He is without money—Applies to William—William applies to the nobles—The nobles to the people—Odo joins Robert.

AMONG the foremost of those who became Crusaders was Duke Robert of Normandy ; and he took the vow without a thought of the effect which it might have on the welfare of his people and on his own fortunes.

Light-hearted in the present, careless for the future, he looked only to the work which he would have to do as a soldier. But then he must be a soldier charged with leading others, and he was a prince whose generosity would need a well-stored treasury. Robert's treasury, however, was not full, and he could not wait and be frugal while the golden stream should

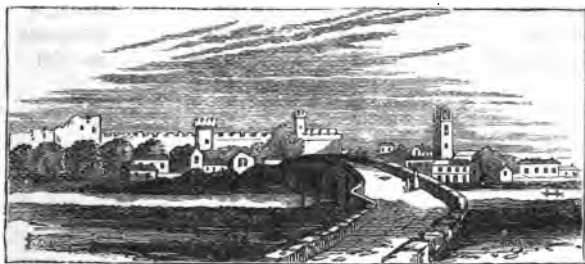
come flowing in. He must set out at once with the other warriors of Christendom, and at once, too, he must have money. There was only one to whom he could turn for it, and this was his brother.

To him accordingly he made his offer (1096), and William forthwith accepted it. It was, indeed, one which harmonized wonderfully with his own hopes and plans. The sum of ten thousand marks was all that Robert asked; and in return for this he was willing to hand over the government of Normandy to William for five years. For that time then he was safe, and who could say that Robert would ever come back? But if he did return, some reason or excuse must be found for refusing to restore the duchy into his hands.

In this art of cheating William was an apt scholar, while Robert, to the credit of his heart if not of his head, was a poor simpleton. But William no more had ten thousand marks in his treasury than Robert had them. He had, however, means of getting them from which Robert was debarred, or to which he could not bring himself to resort. William called his barons together, told them of the demand made upon him, bewailed his poverty, and asked for their help. The aid was promised; but the barons in their turn summoned

their tenants, and named to them the sums which they must provide.

Thus the whole amount was extorted from the English. The red king was not a penny the poorer, and he had the Norman duchy in his grasp. He had got rid of Robert ; and he had got rid also of Odo of Kent and Bayeux,



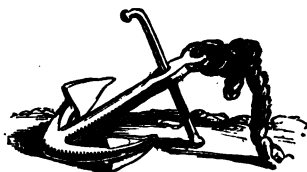
View of Cardiff.

who had resolved to accompany Robert on his pilgrimage.

What Odo's motives may precisely have been, we cannot say. He may have desired still to work on Robert's ambition, and to engage him sooner or later in a struggle for the English crown. But Odo had left England for the last time, and he died at Palermo. Robert came back to experience the tender mercies of his brother Henry, and to struggle on through

a captivity of nearly thirty weary years in the dungeons of Cardiff Castle.

generosity, liberality	tenant, one who rents land,		
Christendom (pronounced	houses, etc. from another		
kris'n-dum), that part of	mark , a coin worth 13s. 4d.		
the world under Chris-	debarred , prevented, shut		
tian rule	out		
harmonized , agreed	captivity , imprisonment		
welfare	treasury	duchy	struggle
people	government	scholar	dungeons
summoned	accompany	experience	mercies





RANDOLF FLAMBARD.

Rufus suffered for his father's sins—The Pope helped William against Harold—Claimed William's homage, which was denied—The feudal system—Bishoprics under the system—Flambard's new plan—Rufus puts it into practice.

IN more ways than one William Rufus paid the penalty for the sins of his father. It is true that he made those sins especially his own, for there have been few men who have so daringly exulted in evil, and taken such pleasure as he took in talk which was simply impious.

The Conqueror had chosen to use as his chief weapon against Harold the sanction and blessing of the Pope. Harold was the perjured man who had broken the law of the Church; and the Norman duke was charged to bring him into the way of righteousness, or to punish him for his iniquity. But it was impossible for him thus to obtain and to dwell on the approval of the Roman pontiff without owning a certain dependence on him, and placing himself under an obligation

which might be turned to very unexpected uses.

Even to William in the fulness of his power the Pope did not hesitate to speak as one who had bestowed on him the crown of England. But when he claimed William's homage as king of England, the Conqueror answered with a plainness of speech which showed that the task of enforcing this claim would, so long as he lived, be hopeless. Still the claim had been made, and the Pope could afford to wait patiently for seasons in which he might urge it more effectually.

At first it seemed as though the king would have everything his own way. By the system of things which William the Conqueror established in this country, although he did not introduce it, all men held their lands by virtue of certain services which they did to the king; and so the king was enabled to say that he was lord of all the lands throughout his realm.

It was a part of this system that when a landowner died, his heir had to pay to the king a sum of money for being allowed to enter on the estate; and this rule was made to apply to bishops as well as to knights and yeomen. Hence the oftener that bishops died or were removed from one bishopric to another, the better it was for the king. But

among his councillors William Rufus had one who thought that he had hit upon a method which would bring much greater wealth to his



St. Augustine's Monastery, Canterbury.

master than he could get out of these frequent changes.

This man was Randolf Flambard, whom the king made his justiciary, or the chief judge in the court which followed him for the administration of justice throughout the land.

The plan which he hit upon was, that when a bishop died, the king should keep the bishopric empty, and take all the money or revenue of the bishopric for his own use, until another bishop should be appointed. He told the king that he might do this for years together; and Rufus, whose great passion was greed of money, which he might spend on evil companions and evil pleasures, was eager and glad to follow it.

He had not to wait long before Lanfranc, whom his father had made archbishop of Canterbury, died (1084); and for four years he kept the see vacant, taking all the money which ought to have gone to the archbishop for the doing of all that a bishop ought to do for the good of his people.

But whether there were bishops and clergymen to look after the poor, the sick, the weak, and the helpless, the king cared nothing. He even said that he hated God and God's law, and that he was determined to do in everything just as he liked. But he learnt after a while that it was no more in his power than it

was in the power of any other man to do this.

penalty, punishment	administration, dispens-
exulted, rejoiced, boasted	ing, the act of giving
sanction, authority, support	vacant, empty
iniquity, wickedness	impious, very wicked
justiciary, a chief justice	approval, sanction

weapon	perjured	pontiff	services
dependance	hesitate	companions	bishopric
councillors	eager	determined	yeomen





ANSELM.

William's illness—Anselm Archbishop of Canterbury—Does not desire the office—Refuses it, but is overruled.

FOR a time Rufus went on bravely enough, and when many of his chief men besought him to put some one in Lanfranc's place, he laughed and mocked at them. At length he fell sick as he was keeping his court at Gloucester.

Proud and fierce as William was when he was strong, he showed himself to be a great coward when he was ill; and he now thought, and his physicians told him, that he was sure to die. The memories of all his wicked deeds came crowding upon his mind, and in the hope of escaping the punishment which he knew that he richly deserved, he confessed his sins to Anselm, a holy man, who was brought to his bedside by his nobles and knights.

Anselm was not an Englishman, but he had come to England at the prayer of Earl Hugh of

Chester, who also wanted his advice and help in his sickness.

His birthplace was Aosta, in the country called Piedmont, or the Foot of the Mountains, because it lies immediately to the south of the Alps. While still a boy, he was taken to the abbey of Bec, in Normandy, and there he became abbot after Lanfranc, whom the Conqueror made Archbishop of Canterbury.

As he listened to Anselm's plain speaking, Rufus felt his heart for the moment touched with some sense of the evil of sin, that is, of disobedience to the laws of God; and he thought that he could not do a better thing than put Anselm in Lanfranc's place. But when he said that Anselm should be archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm was as sorry as all the rest were glad.

Anselm knew that there was very little reason for thinking that the spirit of the king was really changed, and he knew that anyhow he could have no proof of the change until Rufus should have recovered his health. But if on getting well again the king should return to his old ways, he foresaw that there must be a great battle between them, for Anselm was resolved that, come what might, he would do his duty, and he knew that by doing it he should bring on himself the wrath and hatred of the king.

So he stoutly refused to be made archbishop.

But although he fled out of the king's chamber, he was forced back to the bedside, that the king might place in his hands the staff which was the sign of the power belonging to the archbishop.

Anselm closed his hand, and would not take hold of it, but others held it tightly pressed against his fingers while a *Te Deum* was sung over him.

Still Anselm said that all this was of no use, because he was a subject of the Duke of Normandy, and not of the King of England, and therefore he must go back to Bec. But all that was needed was to get the consent of Duke Robert; and it was no hard matter to obtain this.

physicians, doctors
recovered, regained
besought, begged
abbot, chief of an abbey

Te Deum, a hymn of
thanksgiving (so called
from the two words with
which it commences in
Latin)

memories
disobedience
escaping

confessed
foresaw
deserved

immediately
hatred
although

listened
tightly
conqueror





THE DEATH OF THE RED KING.

Anselm's advice to Rufus—He is arrested—Compelled to pay money to the king—The quarrel—Anselm reproves the king—William's sins—Anselm goes to Rome—The people are disgusted—William's death—The supposed cause—His character.

ANSELM was now archbishop, and things came about just as he had feared that they would. Rufus did not die; and as his limbs regained their strength, he shook off all thought of God and all care for his duty. Anselm said that all the lands belonging to the bishopric must be given back, and also that, if the king wished to obtain forgiveness of God, he ought to follow his counsels. The answer of Rufus was given by the hands of Randolf Flambard.

Anselm had just entered Canterbury, and was on his way for the first time to the cathedral, when Flambard laid his hand upon him, and arresting him in the street, summoned him to answer in the king's court for some wrong which he said that the archbishop had done.

His tenants were told that they must pay their rents, not to Anselm, but to the king's justiciary ; and when Anselm was in this way brought to great distress for want of money, the king told him that he must have a gift or present for making him archbishop, although he had for four years been receiving money which ought all to have been paid to the primate.

Anselm had no wish to quarrel with the king, and although he must have felt that he was being badly used, he managed to scrape together five hundred pounds, and offered this as his gift.

But the king cast it aside with insult, and said that Anselm had no business to offer him so mean a sum.

The archbishop answered gently that, although this was his first gift, it would not be the last, if the king would only treat him as a free man. 'If you will treat me as a slave,' he added, 'you shall have neither me nor mine.'

'Go,' shouted Rufus in a rage, 'I want neither thee nor thine.' Anselm left ; but to show that it was not stinginess which prevented him from offering more, he gave the whole of the money to the poor.

So the strife went on, for although Anselm could bear poverty for himself with patience, he could not let the king go on doing wrong upon wrong to the people over whom he was placed

in charge ; and the wrongs done to them by Rufus were many and grievous.

When clergymen died, he kept their livings vacant, just as he had kept the archbishopric vacant, taking all the money, which really belonged to men who had little to spare, even if they lived the hardest life. Nor would he allow clergymen to meet and take counsel together ; and sometimes he would summon the archbishop to appear before his court for reasons which were false or ridiculous.



Statue of William II., from the choir of York Cathedral.

Wearied out at last, Anselm asked his leave to go to Rome ; and he went, although the king sent to tell him that, as soon as he should be out of England, he should take all his revenue again, just as he had done before he named him archbishop.

But before he set out on his journey, Anselm went to the king and said, 'Sir, I am going ; but as perhaps we may not

meet again, I come to offer you my blessing.' The king bowed his head, and the archbishop, after making the sign of the cross over it, in token of his forgiveness, left the room.

William lived three years longer, and he lived on in a way, if possible, more shameless than before ; but he never saw the archbishop again. So great was the horror and disgust of all the people, that they began to talk about his death, which they thought must surely soon come to pass. Their talk gradually took the form of prophecies ; and it would be hard to keep all those forebodings from the king's ears. His sleep, some said, began to be disturbed by horrible dreams.

One night he awoke so frightened that he sent for some of his servants to keep watch near his bedside. Very early in the day some one told him of a vision which had been seen by a foreign monk, and which was thought to threaten evil to the king. 'The man dreams, like a monk, for money,' said Rufus ; 'let him have it.'

He had intended to go out hunting ; but his people besought him so earnestly not to do so, that he gave up the thought of it. At dinner he ate and drank largely, and, cheered by the banquet, rode out into the New Forest. There, one after another, whether



Finding the body of William Rufus.

by chance or by fixed plan, his attendants left him ; and as the sun went down, he was found by some countrymen weltering in his blood, dead or almost dead. An arrow had pierced his breast, and the shaft was broken. The men put his body in a cart, and took it to Winchester. The next day it was laid in a grave in the cathedral, but no bell was tolled, and no office of burial was recited over it (August 1100).

Many stories were told of the way in which his death was brought about. Some said that while he held up his hand to shade his eyes from the sun, as he followed the track of a wounded deer, Walter Tyrrel, a French knight, drew his bow and shot him, and then, putting spurs to his horse, hurried away to the sea, and so making his escape, went as a pilgrim to the Holy Land.

But Tyrrel always persisted that the story was not true, and when he came back from Palestine, he declared solemnly that he had never seen the king on the day of his death, and that he was not in that part of the forest in which he fell.

What is quite certain is, that no one took any trouble to find out how he died. He had lived but forty years, had been king for only thirteen ; but he left behind him a name for daring wickedness such as could scarcely be

surpassed by one whose iniquities had been spread over more than threescore years and ten.

justiciary, a judge, a high officer in the king's court	revenue, income
primate, archbishop	weltering, rolling
forebodings, fears	iniquities, sins, evil-doings
	solemnly, sincerely

bishopric	stinginess	possible	banquet
summoned	grievous	prophecies	attendants
receiving	ridiculous	disturbed	cathedral
business	journey	besought	hurried





HENRY I. AND RANDOLF FLAMBARD.

Henry goes to seize William's treasure—Is successful, and becomes king—Desires the goodwill of the people—His promises—Not all kept—Marries a Saxon princess—Imprisons Flambard—Who escapes to Robert—A friend's advice—Raises an army—Robert is bought off—Shrewsbury rebels—Robert comes to help him—Compelled to yield up his yearly payment—The brothers quarrel—Robert is imprisoned.

HENRY, the youngest brother of the red king, was in the New Forest at the time when he was killed. Whether he knew what was going to happen, we cannot say ; but his life was certainly not such as to make the suspicion of his guilt unreasonable. Anyhow, he happened to be so near at hand that he could hurry off to Winchester to secure the king's treasure before any one could hinder him.

The knight charged with the care of this treasure declared that he would yield it up only at the bidding of his elder brother Duke Robert, who was now far away on his journey back from Jerusalem. Henry drew his sword ; but the bystanders prevented



Henry I. before the treasure-house at Winchester.

the knight from defending himself, and Henry, having gained the treasure and the castle, hastened away to Westminster, and was there crowned king by the Bishop of London.

Thus far Henry's life had been not much better than that of Rufus; but the wickedness of kings is often made to bring good to their people. Henry knew that if the rule of age was to be followed, his brother Robert ought to be king before himself; and it was needful to make good his own title to the crown before Robert could come to claim the crown. The way to do this he thought was by winning the goodwill of the English, and he could do this only by promising to undo the wrongs done to them by William Rufus.

Of promises, therefore, there was no lack. He pledged himself not to keep bishoprics or livings vacant, and not to sell them for money; and to the people he declared that he would rule them according to the old English laws (which were called the laws of King Edward), as they had been put forth by his father the Conqueror.

These promises were not all kept; but they could be urged against him and against those who came after him as matters of right, and they *were* so urged until all those pledges were redeemed, and until many more things had been

asked and obtained than men had thought of in the days of Rufus and of his brother Henry.

But whatever may have been the sins and vices of his life, Henry knew that obstinate evil-doing was not the right road to win the favour of his subjects ; and he showed his wisdom by marrying the daughter of the Scottish king, Malcolm, whose wife was the sister of the Ætheling Edgar. So a lady of the line of Alfred and of Egbert again sate on the English throne, to the great joy of the English people.

He did another wise thing by shutting up in prison Randolf Flambard, whom William Rufus had made justiciary, and afterwards Bishop of Durham, and against whose tyranny every one cried out.

But Flambard was a crafty man, and he knew how to make himself pleasant to his jailors. His friends sent him a pitcher of wine, and at the bottom of it was a rope. The wine he gave to his keepers when they came to dine with him ; and with the rope, when they had gone away and were plunged in a heavy sleep, he let himself down from the window, and fled to Duke Robert, who was now again in Normandy.

Robert had just married a wife, and although he would have liked to be king of England, and meant to claim the crown by and by, he was

for the present much more eager to feast and be merry (1101).

Henry meanwhile knew that he had much to do if he wished really to withstand his brother. Many of his barons and chief men openly showed that they feared or hated him; but he was encouraged by a friend who advised him to promise everything, adding that perhaps he might not be compelled in the long run to perform anything.

So by more promises, solemnly made to Archbishop Anselm, who had come back to England, Henry wound some more chains round himself. For the time he made the people loyal, and he was at the head of a good army when his brother Robert advanced against him with another army from Portsmouth. Instead of fighting, however, he asked the Norman duke to come and talk with him. He knew that his brother could do less with the pen than with the sword, and he soon made with him this compact, that Robert should yield up his claim on the English crown, and that for yielding it up he should receive every year three thousand marks from his brother Henry.

But Robert still had friends in England, and some of them rose in revolt against the king. Among them was one, the Earl of Shrewsbury, whose cruelties were such that the story of them

might well make the ears of all who heard it tingle. The king went to besiege him in his castle at Shrewsbury ; but the earl submitted himself at once, and was banished from the kingdom.

Robert had not much reason to be grateful to such friends ; but thinking that they had come into trouble for his sake, he crossed over to England to see his brother. He was walking into the lion's den. Instead of winning the freedom of others, he found that he had risked the loss of his own ; nor did he get away until he had yielded up as his ransom the yearly payment of the three thousand marks.

But Henry was not a man to stop short at such a point as this. He was resolved to pick a quarrel with his brother, and there was enough in Robert's misrule in Normandy to give a handle for it. The strife was decided before the walls of Tenchebrai (1106).

At the end of the battle, Robert and the Ætheling Edgar, who was with him, were prisoners in the hands of one who knew well when to open and when to shut the prison doors. For Edgar he cared nothing, and so he let him go. By putting Robert in hold, he would be Duke of Normandy as well as king in England ; and so Robert disappeared for ever from the sight of men. He was now fifty years

old ; but he had yet to live well-nigh thirty years longer, and all this weary time he was to spend in hopeless captivity within the walls of Cardiff Castle.

suspicion, doubt
title, claim of right
pledges, promises

justiciary, chief judge
obstinate, stubborn
compact, agreement

certainly
reasonable
declared

tyranny
encouraged
compelled

solemnly
revolt
cruelties

besieged
yielded
decided





THE WRECKING OF THE 'WHITE SHIP.'

Henry hitherto successful—Return to England—Fitz Stephen's request—Henry's reply—The feast on the *White Ship*—Ship strikes on a rock—Prince William escapes in boat—Returns for his sister—Boat is swamped—Only one saved—Effect on the king—The people not very sorry.

HENRY I. had passed the age of fifty years, and he could still say that, though he had brought grief and ruin to many, he had not passed through the furnace of affliction himself. His brother was his prisoner; and his own son, the grandchild of the sister of the Ætheling Edgar, had received the homage of the Norman nobles for the dukedom of the Conqueror.

There was nothing now (1120) to hinder his triumphant return to England, and he made ready to go back in pride and gladness of heart. There was no kingdom now to be fought for and won by the edge of the sword on the other side of the water; but none the less there were

stout sailors who were longing that they might have the honour of taking the king back to the English land.

One of them, named Fitz Stephen, met him at Barfleur, and prayed that he might have this privilege. 'My father,' he said, 'took Duke William in the *Mora* to the fight at Senlac; let my *White Ship*, the finest ship afloat, take you across to-day. Fifty right good seamen are my crew; and I hold my office under pledge of providing for the voyage of my sovereign whenever he crosses the sea.'

Henry answered that for himself the request came too late. He had already promised to go in the ship of another captain; but the *White Ship* might carry his son William, if with his train of joyous companions he chose to go in her.

So the matter was settled. The king went on board, and his ship, sailing away, soon passed out of sight. The prince and his friends were gathered on the deck of the *White Ship*, and there they feasted merrily; and the good things of the banquet were shared with the crew. The goblets of wine passed quickly round, and the mirth grew so fast and furious as the sun sank towards the western horizon, that some thought it prudent to leave the ship and return to the land.

After some time the prince William told Fitz Stephen to hasten after his father ; and the captain repeated the order to his men, in full trust that two or three hours would bring them up to the king's ship. He knew well the wonderful sailing powers of the *White Ship*, and as he had every sail unfurled, he forgot that men heated with wine are tempted to be heedless. The helmsman failed to do his duty, and the ship crashed against a rock. It was not, the story tells us, a sunken rock, nor was it far from the shore ; and for a moment the revellers on the deck may have thought that it could be no very hard task to reach the land.

But tight and strong though the ship might be, it had received a fatal blow. The water forced its way in through the seams of the planks, and Fitz Stephen saw that no time was to be lost. He hurried the prince into a boat, and charged the men in it to row him back forthwith to the land. The sweep of the oars had already taken him beyond danger, when his sister, rushing up on the deck of the *White Ship*, stretched out her arms and shrieked to him to save her.

William cared not much more for the sufferings of men generally than did his father ; but he loved his sister, and he commanded his oarsmen to row back at once. He

would listen to no warning; he had no thought but that of saving his sister from the wreck.

The boat drew up alongside of the sinking vessel; his sister was in his arms; but she was not the only one to leap into the little skiff. With wild haste others dashed over the ship's side, some to fall into the water, some to reach the boat and to swamp it with their weight.

In a few moments more the beautiful *White Ship* parted asunder, and those who were not sucked down with her were left struggling in the water, and struggling in vain. Two men only remained clinging to a mast, one of them a butcher of Rouen. To these men, Fitz Stephen, who still lived, swam up, in hopes of hearing that the prince at least had escaped. 'He is drowned,' was the answer.

Without saying a word, Fitz Stephen held up his hands, and sank beneath the waters. Presently the butcher was the only one who lived of all the happy throng which had crowded the deck of the doomed ship; and he was picked up by a fishing-boat early the next morning.

The king had reached Southampton. As the hours passed on, he marvelled at the slowness of the *White Ship*, of whose speed her captain had

so loudly boasted. When first the butcher brought the tidings, none dared to tell him what had happened. The sun set, and another night passed before any one found courage to give the fatal news.

At last a young man threw himself at his feet, and his tears made known the secret. The king sank to the ground; but soon recovering himself, he began to talk, as if in set phrases, about submission to the will of God. The iron had, however, gone into his soul. The hard and cruel man was made to feel the keenness of the sting of sorrow; and it is said that to his dying day he never smiled again.

It was indeed a woful tale; and it is impossible not to feel a natural pity for so many young lives thus terribly cut short. But there was no great grieving throughout the land. The grandson of the Ætheling's sister was dead; but the people had seen too much of him and of his ways to care greatly for the fate which had snatched him away.

He had been a quick learner in the vile school of which his father and his uncle were apt teachers, and he had prided himself on his hatred and contempt for the people of England. The English must wait yet awhile before they can have as their king

a man whom they may truly call an Englishman.

homage, to pay honour	marvelled, wondered
privilege, favour, honour	set phrases, common, well-
doomed, ill-fated	known sentences
furnace of affliction, suffer-	revellers, feasters
ings, trials	swamp, sink

affliction	merrily	asunder	grieving
sovereign	shrieked	struggling	contempt
helmsman	oarsmen	escaped	keenness





CASTLE-BUILDING IN THE DAYS OF STEPHEN.

PART I.

Stephen chosen king—The people's expectation—Evils become worse—The country in Henry's time—Stephen afraid of his cousin—The reason—Makes many promises—The effect.

THE English people have been brought into a wealthy place ; but they had to go through fire and water before they reached it, and the task of going through fire and water is not a pleasant one.

The old chronicler tells us of the misery borne by vast numbers of the English in the days of the Conqueror. But harder days were in store when Henry I. died, and the citizens of London and Winchester chose Stephen (son of the Earl of Blois, who had married Henry's sister Adela) as their king (1135).

At the death of each sovereign men hoped that they might have better times under his successor, and their hopes were raised high

when the sceptre was placed in the hands of Stephen. Stephen was a courteous knight and a gallant gentleman; he was kind and easy of access to all; and they thought that a man who was brave and generous must rule his subjects well.

But Stephen, though he deserved all the praise which they gave him, did not know how to rule at all. Henry's hand had been heavy; but it was always firm, and men knew what they had to look for from him. What he began he finished; what Stephen began ended generally in little or in nothing. The evils which pressed hard on the land in the days of Henry became sevenfold worse in the days of Stephen, because he could not keep order among those who called themselves his men. In the greatness of their misery many said that Christ and His saints slept.

We can scarcely bring before our minds a picture of the country as it was in those days. Henry had kept down the evil-doers, but he cared nothing for the welfare of the people, if his own pleasures came in the way. He threw back the borders of his forest lands, because he wished to have more space in which he might hunt the wild beasts. Cottages were destroyed, gardens were broken up, fields laid waste, until the deer might be seen wandering in herds of

a thousand or more. When Henry died, the country folk rose up, and so slaughtered them that within a few days not more than one or two could be seen over tracts of many miles.



Rochester Castle.

But under King Stephen men were to suffer worse things than these. Like Henry, he was afraid that another might be chosen to reign

in his place. Henry was afraid of his brother Robert. Stephen was afraid of his cousin Matilda, Henry's daughter, who had been the wife of the Emperor Henry v., and after his death had married Geoffrey, the Earl of Anjou.

He was the more afraid of her, because while her father lived he had promised that he would own Matilda as the lady of the land, and that he would be her liegeman. So King Harold, they say, had sworn to be the liegeman of the Norman Duke William; but Stephen had not been forced to take his oath, as Harold had been, nor had he, like Harold, been made king by the free choice of all the nation.

If, then, he would have the favour of the people, he must promise many things to many men; and one of the things which he promised was, that his barons should be allowed to build on their lands such castles as they might think needful for their safety.

By giving this promise Stephen was really allowing them to make themselves kings each in his own domain. They had sworn, it is true, to serve him as their lord; but they cared nothing for their oaths when they entered the keeps of their mighty fortresses. Here they were safe, though they might do all manner of evil to the poor folk round about, or to travellers

journeying on the highways ; and if they refused to obey the king, the king was compelled to bring his army and lay siege to their castles, just as though he were making war upon a foreign enemy.

anguish, great sorrow	slaughtered, killed
successor, the king who	liegeman, subject
reigned after him	barons, lords, nobles
welfare, happiness	lay siege, surround and try
keeps, strong towers	to take by force

chronicler	generous	needful	highways
courteous	evildoers	domain	foreign
gallant	safety	journeying	folk





CASTLE-BUILDING IN THE DAYS OF STEPHEN.

PART II.

Cruelties practised by the nobles—Seizure of monasteries—David invades England—Battle of the Standard—Bishop Roger of Sarum taken prisoner—How Stephen took Devizes Castle—Agreement between Stephen and Matilda.

THE chroniclers tell us woful tales of the things which went on in these horrid strongholds. The poor people were forced to help in building them, and when they were finished, the barons filled them, they said, with devils. Then they seized those who might have any wealth, and put them in prison for their gold and silver, torturing them with pains unspeakable.

Some, we are told, they hung up by the feet, and smoked them with foul smoke ; some by their thumbs or by the head ; and they hung burning things on their feet, or put a knotted string about their heads, and twisted it till it

went into the brain. They threw them into dungeons swarming with adders, and snakes, and toads. Some they put into a chest which was short and narrow and not deep, and then



Norman gateway, Alnwick Castle.

thrusting sharp stones into this coffin, crushed the man inside it, and broke all his limbs.

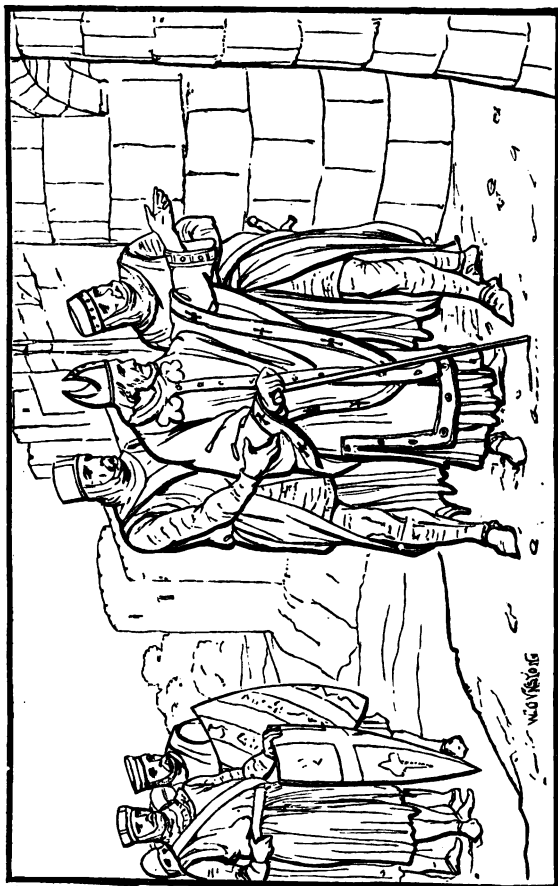
Another thing they had, which they called

a sachentege, an iron collar fixed to a beam and fastened round a man's neck, so that he could neither sit, nor lie, nor sleep. They levied taxes on the towns which were near to their castles, and when the wretched folk had no more to give, they burnt their dwellings.

The whole land was, in truth, one scene of widespread ruin ; the earth bare no corn, and, in the chronicler's words, you might as well have tried to till the sea. Some of these fierce and cruel men did not take the trouble even to build castles, but seized on monasteries and churches, and fortified them so that they might be able to stand a siege, and serve as store-houses for their plunder.

To these miseries were added all the woes caused by the strife between Stephen and his cousin Matilda, for there were many in the land who wished to have her for their queen. In her cause, David the king of the Scots crossed the English borders with a great army, burning villages and churches, and slaying all who came in his way, the old, the young, the sick, and the helpless, or sending them away to be sold as slaves in Scotland.

The Scottish army was beaten in the great battle of the Standard, fought at Northallerton in Yorkshire (1138) ; but while his people were gaining this victory in the north, it was as much



Roger of Sarum before Devizes Castle.

as King Stephen could do to deal with some of the bishops.

The bishops in those days were not all of them men of peace. Among them were powerful barons who had been made bishops, like Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent, the brother of the Conqueror. One of the mightiest of these bishops was Roger of Sarum, an old town which has long ago been deserted, and has quite vanished away, near to the land on which Salisbury now stands.

Roger's castle was at Devizes ; and when King Stephen made him a prisoner, his nephew, who was Bishop of Ely, held the fortress, and refused to give it up.

But Stephen thought of a new way of compelling him. He ordered that no food or drink should be given to the bishop until the castle was surrendered. After three days, Roger, almost dead for lack of sustenance, was taken up to the gate and allowed to speak with his nephew. We may well suppose that he prayed his nephew to yield at once, for the king had sworn that, until the castle was in his hands, he should taste no food. So Stephen became master of the fortress at Devizes.

Thus the weary years went on, until at last it was agreed (1153) that Stephen should remain king as long as he lived, and that after

him the crown should go to Matilda's son Henry, who called himself Plantagenet, or Broom-plant, because this plant was the device of the Earl of Anjou.

In a certain way the English people gave their consent to this arrangement, so far as the great men and the bishops then assembled could be called a council of the nation. Many a long day was yet to pass before the nation should govern itself by its own laws, made by its own representatives in Parliament, and sanctioned by the king.

strongholds, castles	representatives, elected
levied, imposed	members
sustenance, food	sanctioned, agreed to
device, emblem on a shield	torturing, hurting

chroniclers	dungeons	monasteries	arrangement
torturing	wretched	fortress	assembled
unspeakable	widespread	surrender	council





HENRY II. AND THOMAS OF LONDON.

The Pope a judge in English affairs—Two parties—Plantagenet kings to suffer—Thomas Becket—Who he was—Story of Gilbert Becket—Set free by a maiden—Who follows him to England—He is touched by her love—Marries her—Probably untrue story—Thomas Becket is made archdeacon—Grows rich.

WHEN William the Conqueror obtained the Pope's approval of his enterprise against the king of England, he was really making the Pope a judge in the affairs of England, and in the affairs of every kingdom and country in the Christian world.

On the one side there was now the king, with all his power over his barons and great men, and of all lower ranks of the people; on the other side was the Church, a body governed by its own laws, and claiming its own special privileges, and at the head of it was the bishop of Rome.

William scarcely paused to think that if he obtained his kingdom by the aid of the Pope

he admitted that there were certain matters in which the Pope might and must have authority over himself. If he reaped the benefit of his scheme, those who came after him were to pay the penalty, and this penalty was to be paid by the Plantagenet sovereigns of England, of whom Henry of Anjou was the first.

For three hundred years the saint most loved and revered by the English people was Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, whom the four knights murdered in his cathedral, at the bidding, as they said, of Henry II.

His tomb became a place of yearly pilgrimage, and a splendid shrine preserved his bones, which were treasured as the most precious of the relics of Christendom.

He had been the fearless enemy of tyrants, the undaunted champion of the people. For them he had lived, and for them he had died; and every circumstance in his life and in his death fixed itself in their memory and their affections.

There must be something wonderful in all his fortunes from the cradle to the grave. Nay, there must be something wonderful in the events which led to the birth of so great a saint. When the mind of a people is thus fixed on the life of a man whom they love, a harvest of wonderful stories about him is sure to spring

up; and it sprang up abundantly round the name of Thomas of Canterbury.

Thomas' father, Gilbert Becket, was a simple merchant of London, who had been born in Rouen, and whose wife was the daughter of a citizen of Caen, in Normandy. He was therefore not an Englishman, but a Norman, who had come to live in England.

All this might be true, but it was not enough for those in whose eyes Thomas was one of the greatest of Christian martyrs.

So the tale was spread throughout the land that Gilbert Becket was a valiant knight, whose heart was kindled with the longing to rescue the holy sepulchre of Christ his Lord from the grasp of the infidel Turk. So, putting on the badge of the Cross which pledged him to this holy work, he hastened away to Palestine, and was there made a prisoner, and thrown into a noisome dungeon.

His bravery, his beauty, and his sorrow touched the heart of the fair maiden whose father had become Gilbert's master. The peerless Christian knight must not be allowed to waste his life in a living death. Come what might, he must be set free, and set free he was by her unwearied efforts, and by these alone.

Gilbert was gone; and it was a joy to her to think that her love had saved him. But

without him life was a burden too heavy to be borne. Her home had become hateful to her. She must roam the world over, if need be, but she cannot rest until she finds him.

He comes from the far west, she knows. She has heard him say that his name is Gilbert, and that he lived in London. Armed with these two words, she departs without fear on her long pilgrimage. The word London enables her at last to reach the great city; and there up and down its many streets she wanders, with the one name in her mouth, 'Gilbert, Gilbert,' until she meets him.

Gilbert, we are told, had thought but little of the woman who would have given her life to save him. But if he had forgotten her while he was absent from her, he could not resist the gentle pleading of the love which had brought her from the shores of the Holy Land to the far-off island of the western ocean. He was ready to make her his wife, if he might do so lawfully.

But was she not a servant of the false prophet of Mecca, and how could he wed one on whom the Church had laid its ban? The difficulty soon vanished. The Saracen maiden was ready to be baptized; and thus, coming from the font with the name Matilda, she became the

wife of the man whom she had rescued from hopeless bondage.

The story is not without its beauty, but it is told of many knights and maidens in many countries ; but what we have to note is, that it is not told to us by any of the men who wrote the life of her illustrious son. We have seven or eight lives of the great saint written by as many men, and not one of them takes any notice of this strange tale. Nor can we say that they left it out because they could not bring themselves to believe anything so strange and wonderful, for they tell us of all sorts of wonderful things which showed to how great a height he should rise, and how he should even become Archbishop of Canterbury.

But although this tale may be full of mere fancies, there is no doubt that the lad, as he grew up, showed that he possessed great quickness of mind as well as beauty of person. He entered first the service of Archbishop Theobald ; and when Roger, Archdeacon of Canterbury, became Archbishop of York, Thomas succeeded him as archdeacon.

He was only a deacon ; but he was thus placed amongst the richest and most influential of the clergy, and he received many other things which greatly added to his wealth and his power. So little of truth was there in the

tale which spoke of King Henry as raising Thomas from poverty when he made him Archbishop of Canterbury.

enterprise, undertaking	noisome, filthy
privileges, rights, powers	Saracen, Arab
pilgrimage, resort for religious purposes	illustrious, famous
influential, powerful	ban, curse
	knight, titled soldier

approval	martyr	unwearied	rescued
authority	valiant	baptized	possessed
abundantly	peerless	pleading	deacon





BECKET THE CHANCELLOR AND THE ARCHBISHOP.

Becket is made chancellor—And a favourite of the king—Will not join in the king's pleasures—The king, Becket, and the beggar—How Becket promoted the king's interests—His grandeur—Wise in council—Brave in war—The king's mistake—Duty was Becket's motive—The power of the Pope—Opposed to the power of the king—Becket to be archbishop—His regrets—His consecration.

BY Archbishop Theobald young Thomas Becket, already rich and great, was recommended to the favour of the king, and soon became his chancellor (1155).

His great powers showed themselves in his new office, as they had done in the service of the archbishop. He became renowned for the wisdom with which he discharged his duties, for the kindness and courtesy of his manners, and for the magnificence with which he maintained his high estate. He soon gained the affection of the king, who would have made him a partner of his evil pleasures as well as of his more

serious work as a ruler ; but in these it is certain that Becket would have no share.

Had he done so, we must have heard of the fact from the many who were eager to say of him all the ill that they could ; but they who have spoken most harshly of him have never said one word ascribing to him anything but an upright and sober life.

So great was the liking which Henry showed for him, that the world, it was said, had never seen two friends more thoroughly of one mind ; and it is perhaps only for the sake of showing the freedom which marked their intercourse that some of the stories told of them were put together.

Thus, on a cold winter's day they met, we are told, a beggar, who was shivering in his tattered raiment.

'Would it not be charity,' asked the king, 'to give this fellow a cloak to keep him from the cold ?'

When the chancellor said that it would, Henry seized the rich fur mantle which covered Becket's shoulders, and threw it to the beggar.

In Becket the king had indeed a servant who knew how to promote the interests of his master. When King Stephen died, the country was in wretched plight. The men whom he had brought from foreign lands to serve as soldiers in his

army were doing grievous wrongs to the people, plundering their goods, and driving them from their lands. But worst of all was the cruelty of the great men, whose castles were simply dens of robbers and murderers. It was Becket who urged the king to send away the foreign soldiers and destroy the strongholds of the barons who would not obey the law.

As the servant of a great king, Becket kept a splendid house, and the proudest nobles were glad to have their children as retainers in the household of the London merchant's son. He displayed all this pomp more for his master's sake than for his own; and so, when once he entered Paris with a stately train on an embassy to the French king, the people cried out, as he went along, 'If the chancellor travels with all this glory, what must be the grandeur of the king of England?'

Becket was as wise and brave in war as he was in peace. He was resolved to uphold his master's power to the uttermost, and sometimes he advised the king to do things from which he would have reaped great advantage, but which he was not bold enough to do. Becket knew no fear; he would ride against the strongest knights, and some of them he unhorsed with his own hands.

He was, in truth, a great leader in battle, and

one of those who wrote the story of his life gives him this praise, which sounds strange for a man who was archdeacon of Canterbury:— ‘Who can recount the deeds which he did, and the havoc which he caused, at the head of a strong body of soldiers? He attacked castles, razed towns and cities to the ground, burnt down houses and farms without a touch of pity, and never showed the least mercy to any one who rose in rebellion against the king.’

All this zeal and all this wise statesmanship led the king into a great mistake. He thought that he should have the benefit of Becket’s wisdom and firmness wherever he might be; and he forgot, or he did not know, that Becket had served the Archbishop Theobald with the same wisdom, and zeal, and earnestness, and that he was a man who would be sure to do what he thought his duty in any office to which he might be called.

He now did all that he could in the service of the king; but Henry did not understand that if the welfare of the Church and the clergy were made to depend upon Becket, Becket would fight for them as stoutly, though not perhaps in the same way, as he had fought for the king.

Nor did Henry fully understand what had come of the dealings of William the Conqueror with the Pope. He did not see that by getting

the sanction of the Pope for his designs against King Harold, the Conqueror was giving him a power which the Pope would be likely to use to some purpose after he was dead.

This was exactly what happened, and the Church became a power distinct from the king's power. The clergy gained certain rights and liberties which were not granted to the rest of the people, and as time went on, they held themselves more and more apart, and the Archbishop of Canterbury became more and more a king, holding power under the Pope, and having the rest of the bishops and clergy as his subjects.

Henry could not bring himself to believe this or to see it. He dreamt that things were not what they were, and from this dream he was to have a rude awaking. Archbishop Theobald died, and after some time Henry told Becket that he must take his place.

For some time he had feared that the king might say this, and he was heartily sorry, for he did not wish that he himself should be the doer of things which would vex and hurt the king.

A friend who came to see him, and who had heard what the king's wishes were, said, pointing to Becket's splendid robes, 'Is this a dress for an archbishop of Canterbury?'

Becket told him that there were some poor priests in England who would make better

archbishops, and he added, 'If the king makes me archbishop, I must forfeit his favour or that of God.'

Becket saw all that was hidden from the eyes of the king ; but Henry would not be convinced, and the great chancellor was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury in the church of the abbey of Westminster (1162).

'The king has worked a miracle. He has turned a soldier into a priest, and a layman into an archbishop.' So said Gilbert Foliot, bishop of Hereford.

chancellor, highest judicial officer	retainers, followers, servants not holding menial offices
magnificence, grandeur	statesmanship, method of government
razed, levelled to the ground	layman, one who is not a priest
forfeit, lose	
raiment, clothing	

recommended	partner	foreign	grandeur
renowned	harshly	soldiers	archdeacon
courtesy	intercourse	embassy	rebellion
consecrated	earnestness	designs	heartily





THE QUARREL BETWEEN HENRY AND BECKET.

Becket now the champion of the Church—New mode of life—Resigns the chancellorship—The king claims Danegelt—Becket refuses—New quarrels—Council at Clarendon—Becket takes the oath—Repents—Undergoes penance—Open war with the king—Found guilty of treason—Refuses to hear sentence—Friends advise flight—He escapes to the Continent.

WHAT Becket had feared came to pass. He had served the king with zeal, because he had been charged with the king's interests; and he served him as no king in England had ever been served before.

He was now charged with what he held to be the interests of the Church of God; and he became as firm a champion of the Church and of the liberties of the clergy as he had been of the royal power. Becket never shrank from what he thought his duty. Anselm, whom the Red King made archbishop, had been a saint without knowing it; Becket thought that he was now bound to be a saint, and he resolved to live as one.

People might say that he was playing a part; but it must be allowed that he played it conscientiously. Under his priestly dress he put on a monk's frock, and under this he wore a shirt of haircloth. His outward grandeur was but little changed; but he lived on very little food, and submitted himself to frequent scourgings. Every night he washed the feet of thirteen beggars; and at his board, in place of steel-clad knights or richly-robed nobles, was seen a throng of clergymen and monks, for whose benefit books were read out in Latin, instead of the light talk which had enlivened the tables of the chancellor.

The dark cloud began to gather in the sky when Becket wrote to the king to say that his duty would not allow him to remain any longer chancellor. Thus far he had been a joint king; he was now, people said, a king by himself; and Henry was not one who would suffer another to rule except in his own name in his own kingdom.

The strife began when the king declared that the tax called the Danegelt, which had been raised from the days of Ethelred (991) for bribing the Danes to leave the land in peace, should be put down in the list of the king's taxes, and levied like the rest.

The archbishop declared that it must not be put on this list, because it had always been

raised as a free gift. With a great oath the king declared that it should be enrolled. 'By the same oath by which you swear,' answered Becket, 'it shall never be levied on my lands while I live.'

Causes for fresh quarrels were not lacking. It had become the rule that clergymen who broke the laws of the land should be tried in the bishops' courts, and not by the judges of the king; and the king complained that in this way many men who deserved the severest punishment escaped with very little or with none.

Henry ordered his council to meet him at Clarendon near Salisbury, and there he called on the barons and the clergy to swear to certain rules which made all alike subject to the common laws of the land.

On reading these rules, the archbishop thought them dangerous for the Church; but when the king saw that Becket would rather not bind himself by them, he burst out into a furious rage, and the other bishops, falling on their knees before Becket, prayed him to take the oath. He did so, but he was almost immediately sorry for what he had done; and when he was asked to put his seal to the paper, he refused.

As he went homewards, he said to his friend, Herbert of Bosham, 'This is a fit punishment

for a man of pride and vanity, a patron of players, and a follower of hawks and hounds.'

Herbert told him that if St. Peter denied his Lord, he yet repented him of his sin.

On reaching Canterbury, Becket underwent, of his own choice, the greatest hardships, and



Becket's mitre, preserved at Sens.

sent to the Pope asking for absolution for his wrong-doing. The Pope gave it, and the archbishop felt that he was free of the oath which he had taken at Clarendon.

The king and the archbishop were now at open war. The king demanded an account of all the

moneys which had passed through the hands of the chancellor. Becket pleaded that he was not bound to make this account, having received the acquittance of the king's justiciary before he accepted the archbishopric.

At last the council agreed that Becket was guilty of perjury and treason, and the aged Robert, Earl of Leicester, was sent to inform him of his sentence.

'My sentence?' answered Thomas. 'Son and earl, hear me first. The king made me archbishop against my will; and I was then declared free from all worldly obligations. You are my children; how then can you dare to sit in judgment on your spiritual father? I am to be judged under God only by the Pope. To him I appeal, and before him I cite you to appear. Under the protection of the Catholic Church and of the Holy See, I depart.'

Rising, with the cross in his hand, he walked slowly down the hall, amid the din of many voices, while some threw straws at him. When one called him a traitor, he turned round sharply and said, 'You should rue that word, were it not for my order.'

Later in the day he sent to ask the king's permission to leave the kingdom. Henry replied that he should have his answer on the morrow; and the archbishop's friends, thinking that this

foreboded danger to him that night, begged him to fly at once. It was at least likely that the king would imprison him.

The archbishop ordered his bed of rushes to be spread for him before the high altar of the church, as if he intended to spend the night there. But at midnight he arose, and with two monks made his escape first to Lincoln, and thence to Estrey, near Deal. On All Souls' Day, the first of November, he crossed over to the Flemish coast, and at last reached the monastery of Clair Marais, near St. Omer.

champion, defender, one		lacking, wanting
who fights for		absolution, forgiveness
conscientiously, justly,		acquittance, discharge
according to conscience		perjury, false-swearing

scourgings	enrolled	patron	worldly
frequent	severest	denied	obligations
enlivened	immediately	demand	protection
permission	answer	foreboded	monastery





BECKET IN EXILE.

Becket's life on the Continent—Henry banishes his friends—The king and Becket meet in France—Still not reconciled—More quarrels—They again meet—His return to Canterbury—Sermon on Christmas Day—Henry's rash expression.

SIX years of weary waiting and still more wearying strife passed away before Thomas of Canterbury came back to England to die.

At the abbey of Pontigny he put on the coarse dress of a Cistercian monk. Delicate food was placed on the table before him; but while he fed on pulse and gruel, he gave the meat and game to beggars. At midnight he rose from his richly-covered bed, and summoned his chaplain to scourge him. He tore his flesh with his nails, and lay on the bare stones of the floor. His sleep was broken by dreams; his days were given to studying the laws of the Church, which made him still more resolved to fight the battle to the end.

It was fought in the council chambers of the Pope and of the emperor; it was fought by the

king in the lanes and the cottages of England, and sometimes with no very worthy weapons.

While Thomas was at Clair Marais, Henry banished all his kinsmen, his friends, and his dependants. All, young or old, strong or sick, were to go at once to the archbishop, that he might be overwhelmed by their wretchedness and beggary; and this order was cruelly carried out by Randolf de. Broc, a man who hated the archbishop with the fiercest hatred, and who was to be one of his murderers.

At last the king and the archbishop met in the presence of the French king on the plain of Montmirail. Thomas declared himself ready to submit to the judgment of the two kings and of the bishops then assembled, 'saving the honour of God.'

On hearing these words the king burst into fiery rage. 'Mark, sir,' he said to the French king, 'the mad pride of this man. He pretends that he has been banished, when he has only run away; and that he is maintaining the cause of the Church, when I am willing that he should rule the Church with as much freedom as any that have gone before him.'

Again they parted in a strife which seemed hopeless; again the conference was renewed, and again the reconciliation was hindered because the king would not give the archbishop the

kiss of peace. He had sworn, he said, never to grant him this favour ; and without it Becket said that he could not trust the king.

New causes of quarrel arose. Henry wished his eldest son to be crowned king during his lifetime, and Thomas heard that the Pope had given the Archbishop of York leave to crown him. His anger was deeply stirred ; he declared that in the court of Rome Christ was always crucified and Barabbas always released ; that God alone could provide a remedy when the innocent appealed in vain, and that for himself he was ready to die.

How long the strife might have gone on we cannot say ; but some one hinted to the king that Becket was a much more dangerous personage away from his bishopric than he would be within it. He took the hint, and Becket was brought to a meeting which the French and English kings were to have at Fretteville.

The archbishop complained to Henry of the crowning of his son. Henry replied that the state of the kingdom made it necessary, that his son's wife should be crowned by Becket when the marriage took place, and that his son should at the same time again receive the crown at his hands.

With the king the archbishop seemed to have made up his quarrel. He had not done so with

the bishops who took part in the crowning of the young prince. To these he sent letters, cutting them off from the communion of the faithful.

‘You come to us,’ they said, ‘not in peace, but in fire and flame.’ ‘There is no peace,’ answered the archbishop, ‘but to men of goodwill.’

The ship which carried Becket to England with his banner displayed came to land at Sandwich, and Randolf de Broc, as sheriff of Kent, searched his baggage, and insisted that he should absolve the bishops. Becket refused, and went on his way to Canterbury. The clergy with their people came forth in crowds to meet him, and saluted him with the exulting shout, ‘Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord!’

Having entered the cathedral, he took his seat on his throne, and preached on the text, ‘Here we have no continuing city.’ On Christmas Day he preached another sermon on the angelic song, ‘Peace on earth, goodwill towards men.’ He reminded the people that there had been already one martyr (Alphege) amongst their archbishops, and added that there soon might be another. He then broke out into strong condemnation of the bishops, and in token of their utter destruction, dashed a lighted candle to the ground.

Meanwhile the bishops had hurried away to

the king, whom they found near Bayeux, in Normandy. He was sorely perplexed, and asked them what he should do. They could give him no advice; but one said foolishly that he would have no peace so long as Thomas lived.

Henry burst into one of his fits of furious rage. 'Is there no one,' he cried, 'among my thankless and cowardly courtiers, who will free me from the insults of a low-born and turbulent priest?'

Without knowing it, he had by these words sealed the archbishop's doom. It was not the only time he had spoken thus, but it served the purpose of some who heard the words to act on them now.

delicate, fine, nice, agree- able	turbulent, noisy, trouble- some
chaplain, a family priest or minister	conference, meeting for consultation
maintaining, upholding	released, set free
exulting, joyous, trium- phant	insisted, determined
necessary, needful	perplexed, troubled doom, fate

wearying	dependants	hatred	renewed
gruel	overwhelmed	judgment	personage
emperor	fiercest	assembled	communion



THE DEATH OF THOMAS OF CANTERBURY.

PART I.

Four knights go to Canterbury—Reach the palace—Their talk with Becket—He is urged to flee—Followed by the soldiers into the cathedral.

HENRY had no sooner expressed his wish to be rid of the archbishop than four knights hurried away from his court, and made their way with all speed to Canterbury. On the next day the king held a council. Some of the barons advised that Becket should be put to death; but at last it was resolved that he should be arrested, and that the four knights should be prevented from doing anything of their own will.

But these knights were already far beyond their reach. They had travelled with the haste of men who come on an errand of murder, and they may have formed some vague plans on the

road. On the 28th of December 1170, the Feast of the Innocents, they were lodged in the abbey of St. Augustine. Soon after the archbishop had



The chapter-house, Canterbury.

dined and withdrawn from the hall, they went to the palace, and Becket was summoned back to hear a message from the king.

The message, as the knights chose to deliver it, was a command to absolve the bishops who had helped to crown the king's son. His answer was that they lay not under his sentence, but under that of the Pope, who alone could set them free.

'Then,' said the spokesman of the four ruffians, 'it is the king's order that you and your disloyal followers shall leave the kingdom.'

'Such a command,' replied Thomas, 'it is not seemly for him to give. No power on earth shall henceforth part me from my people.'

'You speak in peril of your life,' they cried; and the archbishop said at once, 'Do you come to murder me? In the battle of the Lord I will meet you front to front and foot to foot.'

As the knights turned to go, their spokesman enjoined all who heard him to arrest the primate until the king should have done justice on his body.

Becket's friends and servants closed and barred the gates; but the knights had gone only for their armour and their weapons, and the sounds of an axe hewing at the door were soon heard. The bystanders were all thrown into a tumult of fear. 'Why do you not fly?' said one of them; 'they are seeking your life.'

'I am ready to die,' was the archbishop's answer.

'But we who are sinners,' the same voice replied, 'are not so weary of life.'

'God's will be done,' was all that Thomas answered to this hint.

The bell now tolled for vespers, and the faithful friends who surrounded him urged and even bore him into the cathedral, as the cloisters began to resound with the clang of weapons and armour. Breaking off the service, the monks were hurrying to shut the doors, when the archbishop insisted that none should be hindered from entering the house of God. In the extremity of their fear the rest sought shelter behind the altars, or in dark corners of the building, over which the shadows of night were fast closing; and Becket was left standing near the altar of St. Benedict.

The armed knights had at length entered the building, intent now, we can scarcely doubt, on murder, whatever may have been their purpose when they went into the palace. They must have known that the archbishop was not a man to be frightened by threats of violence, and that they could avoid slaying him only by making him their prisoner.

'Where is the traitor?' they shouted. No answer was returned. 'Where is the archbishop?'

'See me here,' said Becket, 'no traitor, but a priest of God.'

arrested, taken prisoner	cloisters, covered paths
vague, not clear, undefined	about a cathedral
vespers, evening prayers	violence, harm
extremity, height	traitor, a rebel

expressed	spokesman	followers	hewing
hurried	ruffians	henceforth	insisted
arrested	dialoyal	enjoined	frightened





THE DEATH OF THOMAS OF CANTERBURY.

PART II.

Becket is slain—Monks' joy on seeing how he was dressed—
Miracles said to be wrought—Henry compelled to yield to
clergy's wishes—Does penance—Is scourged by the monks.

THE order to absolve the bishops was repeated in vain. They then closed on him, with the notion possibly of dragging him away alive. But he clung to a pillar, and grappling with one of them, dashed him with his great strength to the ground; he charged another of them to remember that he had sworn fealty to himself.

'I owe fealty to the king only,' cried the soldier, now mad with rage, and struck with his sword a blow which almost severed the arm of Edward Grim, and slightly wounded the archbishop on the head.

The last words which he was heard to utter were, 'Lord, receive my spirit.' A few more blows finished the work. The last of the knights



Murder of Thomas à Becket.



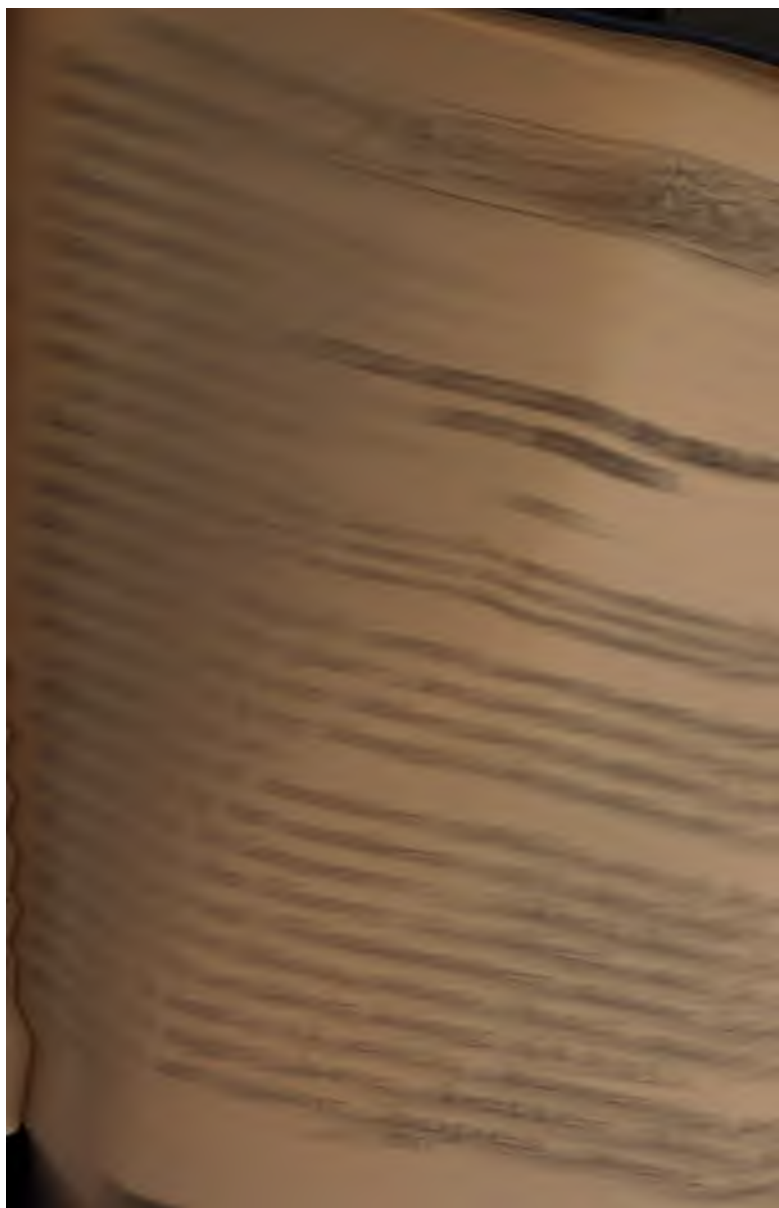
ANSELM

**William's illness—Anselm Archbishop
desire the office—Refuses it, but ..**

**FOR a time Rufus went on
when many of his chief men
some one in Lanfranc's place
mocked at them. At length
was keeping his court at O**

Proud and fierce as William
strong, he showed himself
when he was ill; and he
physicians told him, that
The memories of all his
crowding upon his mind,
escaping the punishment;
he richly deserved, he
Anselm, a holy man, who
bedside by his nobles and

**Anselm was not an Englishman
come to England at the pr**



who struck him smote off a piece of his skull, and a ruffian by his side crushed out the brains with his heel.

When after the departure of the murderers, who rushed to plunder the palace, the monks came back, and took up the body of the archbishop, they were rejoiced to find that in all but his outer robes Becket had lived and died a monk as true as themselves. His body was covered with the coarsest sackcloth, his underclothes were swarming with vermin. The flood-gates of their enthusiasm were opened, and they gave thanks for the martyrdom of the saint who had dared to die for his flock.

If a few still ventured to think or to say that he had brought his doom upon himself by his obstinacy, their words were unheeded, or were overborne by the multitude of miracles which at once began to be wrought.

Henry's ministers prohibited the miracles; but they might as well have ordered that the tide should not ebb and flow. The king himself expressed his horror of the deed, and declared himself guiltless of all concern with it. At first none perhaps really believed him; but whether his words were true or not, he found himself compelled to yield to the clergy all those things which he had refused to yield to the archbishop.

Three years after the murder, the king went to do penance at Canterbury (1173). As soon as he came within sight of the town, he dismounted and walked with bare feet to the cathedral, where the body of the saint lay in the crypt.

While the king remained prostrate before it, Gilbert Foliot, now bishop of London, told the assembled multitude that Henry was wholly innocent of all share in the saint's death, but that as his hasty words had tempted the knights to their deadly crime, he would submit himself to the discipline of the Church.

The king desired to be scourged ; the monks were very willing to gratify his wish, and no hint is given that they struck lightly. After the scourging, Henry spent a night and a day in tears before the shrine of him who had once been his comrade in the hunting-field as well as on the bench of the judge, and who was now a wonder-working saint with a name familiar to the whole Christian world.

absolve, to free from guilt
fealty, faithfulness, loyalty
sackcloth, coarse rough
cloth

scourged, beaten

obstinacy, stubbornness
crypt, an underground
chapel, tomb, or burying-
place

familiar, well-known

grappling

severed

departure

vermin

coarsest

martyrdom

prohibited

believed

penance

prostrate

innocent

discipline



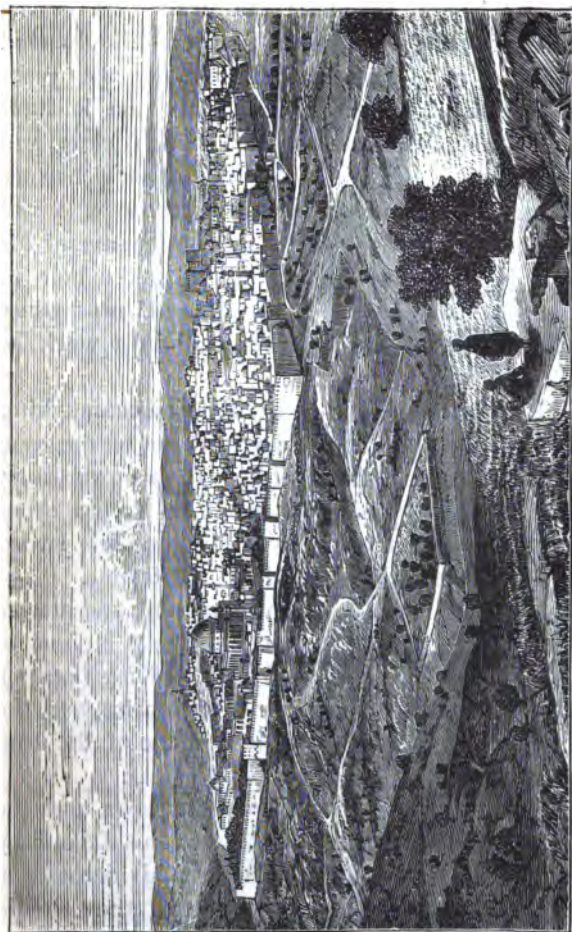
THE EXPLOITS OF RICHARD THE LION-HEARTED.

PART I.

Henry determines to go on a Crusade—The rebellion of his barons, led by his sons, causes his death—Richard succeeds—Raises money—Murder of Jews at his coronation—They seize York Castle—Kill each other—Siege of Acre—Slaughter of hostages.

KING HENRY II. had no great liking for pilgrimages and crusades; and although after the death of Thomas of Canterbury he promised to lead an army with the French king to the Holy Land, he was not very eager to fulfil his promise.

For the entreaties of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who brought him the keys of the Holy Sepulchre, he cared little; but his mind was somewhat changed when he heard that the Holy City had fallen into the hands of the infidel Saladin, and that the Crescent had taken the place of the Cross on the dome of the mosque of Omar (1187).



View of Jerusalem.

He began to make ready for his departure; but he was never to see the snow-clad heights of Lebanon, or look on the rushing waters of the Jordan. His son Richard made a covenant with the French king, and was joined by many of his father's barons. Henry asked to see the list of those who had done this. At the head was the name of his son John, whom he wished to make heir to the English crown. He could read no farther. He fell into a raging fever, and in a week he died (1189).

Richard the Lion-hearted now became king of England; but his mind was set not on the good of his people, but on adding to his own glory, and his glory could be increased in no other way so effectually as by girding on his sword to do battle with the infidels in Palestine.

What he needed most was money, and he was better able to get it than was Duke Robert of Normandy, the brother of the Red King (Les. I.). Richard sold earldoms and bishoprics, and the claims which he had on the homage of the king of Scotland.

He looked for much from the Jews, and the Jews, in their eagerness to win his favour by their gifts, entered his palace on his coronation day, although he had ordered that they should not do so. The mob thrust them out, and

murdered them ; and so the signal was given for the persecution and slaying of Jews in all parts of the country.

At York the Jews hurried with their goods into the castle. The governor left it ; and taking this as a sign that he was plotting with the Christians for their destruction, they closed the gates against him on his return. With the armed bands of the sheriff, and with the mob of the city, the governor advanced to the attack ; and the Jews could hear the voice of a clergyman urging on the people to destroy the enemies of Christ.

To avoid falling into their hands, the Jews resolved to kill each other, and a very few only were found alive when the castle gates were thrown open. These few men had agreed to surrender if their lives should be spared. The promise was made, and it was broken.

Leaving his country in this state of disorder and misery, Richard reached Palestine in time to join in the siege of Acre. Saladin was compelled to surrender the town (1191); and he agreed to give up the piece of the true cross, which had been taken from the Christians in the battle of Tiberias, and to give some thousands of hostages for the payment of a large sum of money within forty days.

The days passed and the money was not paid,

nor was the piece of the true cross given up. On the forty-first day two thousand seven hundred of the hostages were led up to the top of a hill from which the sight could be seen in the camp of Saladin, and were there all slaughtered ; and a number not much smaller were put to death at the same time on the walls of the city.

Patriarch , the highest officer of the Church at Jerusalem	sheriff , the officer who puts the law in force
Crescent , the Mohammedan flag	homage , honour
covenant , agreement	mosque , Mohammedan place of worship
effectually , thoroughly	dome , circular roof
	surrender , give up

pilgrimages	bishoprics	burned	compelled
entreaties	eagerness	governor	slaughtered
infidel	coronation	agreed	destruction
departure	persecution	disorder	girding





THE EXPLOITS OF RICHARD THE LION-HEARTED.

PART II.

Richard compelled to leave Jerusalem untaken—Sets sail—Is wrecked
—Becomes known—Is taken prisoner—Discovered by Blondel
—People taxed to pay his ransom—John tries to keep him
prisoner—He is released.

RICHARD still longed to recover Jerusalem ; but when he reached Bethlehem, the Crusaders found that they could not dare to advance farther. The Turks had destroyed the wells, and they would die for want of water. He was led to the top of a hill from which he might see Jerusalem ; but he held up his shield before his face, as being unworthy to look on the city which he had failed to rescue from the hands of Saladin. In all the battles which he had fought, he had shown indeed the strength and more than the courage of the lion ; but it was of no use.

He went on board his ship at Acre, and as he sailed from the shore he held out his arms and cried, 'Most holy land, I commend thee

to the care of the Almighty ; may He grant me life to return and deliver thee from the yoke of the Infidels.'

A great storm drove him from his proper course, and after battling with furious winds, he found himself on the northern part of the coast of the Adriatic Sea. Richard knew that he had enemies in this land ; but he hoped to escape by putting on a pilgrim's dress and letting his beard grow. He sent one of his companions, with the gift of a ruby ring, to ask for a passport for some pilgrims returning from the Holy Land.

The governor of the city to whom he brought the ring looked at it long, and said, 'This jewel can come only from a king ; that king must be Richard of England. Tell him he may come to me in peace.'

But Richard was afraid to trust him, and in the night he fled away. For some days still he contrived to avoid notice, although his companions were one after another taken prisoners. At last only one young lad was left with him, and this boy, being taken in the market-place at Erperg, near Vienna, was put to the torture, and told his master's name. In a little while the Lion-hearted king was a prisoner in a Tyrolese castle (1192).

It was some time before his place of imprisonment became known, and some said that it



Richard Cœur de Lion before Jerusalem.

was discovered by his faithful minstrel Blondel, who played a tune of which Richard was fond, and to which he answered from his dungeon.

The English, who had been taxed to furnish money for his crusade, were now taxed still more heavily to furnish money for his ransom. The more they offered, there was one who for a time was able to outbid them; and this was John, Richard's younger brother.

John wished to have the crown of England for himself, and he told the emperor that he would give him £20,000 for every month during which Richard's imprisonment might be prolonged. But the emperor had his barons to deal with, and his barons showed that they looked on his treatment of Richard as unjust and cruel, perhaps also as unwise.

At last Richard was set free (1194), and he came back to England, which he had made poor, to make it poorer still by taxes raised to help him in new quarrels, from which he gained no more good than he had gained from his crusade.

pilgrim, traveller to some holy place		prolonged, lengthened, made longer	
passport, order for free passage		commend, give up yoke, slavery	
recover	courage	although	heavily
destroyed	enemies	imprisonment	emperor
rescue	governor	crusade	treatment



KING JOHN AND THE POPE.

John's wicked reign—Good out of evil—Norman kings hindered English freedom—Obliged to make promises—People claimed their fulfilment—Quarrel about the archbishop—John refuses to accept Langton—The interdict and what it meant—John's conduct towards the priests—He is excommunicated—Bishops appeal to the French king—War—John threatens to become a Mohammedan.

OF all the kings who have sat on the English throne, John was perhaps the very worst. His wickedness made him at war with his subjects from the beginning of his reign to its close. It is a miserable story of falsehood, treachery, cowardice, and tyranny; and we are very far from being able to say that they who opposed the king did always what they should.

But of England more than of any other country it may be said, that the evil-doings of her kings have in the long-run promoted the welfare of the people, and that this benefit was in proportion to the injustice or the folly of their acts. John was the worst of English kings; and the foundations of English freedom were more

strengthened during his reign than in any other.

The foundations were strengthened ; but they were not then laid. This work had been done long before Harold fell at Hastings ; and good King Alfred was a king of English freemen, although these Englishmen had unhappily a multitude of English slaves. But though the



Tomb of King John, Worcester Cathedral.

foundation had been laid, the great fabric had still to be built up ; and the Norman kings, beginning with William the Conqueror, did a great deal to hinder or to prevent this work.

But we have seen that even for the Red King, and for his brother who followed him, it was no easy matter to do what they liked ; and in order to make themselves more powerful than the great body of their barons or nobles,

they found themselves obliged to make large promises to the people.

These promises they often broke, but they were not allowed to forget them ; and as each fresh king made fresh promises, these were all remembered, and brought against them when the fit time had come. The king thus found himself more and more tangled in the meshes of a net, out of which the sovereign came forth at last, stripped of all the privileges of a despot, and acknowledged simply as the constitutional ruler of a free country.

The truth is, that neither side knew what the end of the great struggle would be. The king fought first with his barons against the Pope, and then with the Pope against his barons ; and both the king and the Pope helped on the side which they had no wish to favour.

The Archbishop of Canterbury died (1205). The monks of Canterbury wished to have a man named Reginald as archbishop ; the king wished to have the Bishop of Norwich, a man more at home on the battlefield than in the Church ; and the Pope, Innocent III., wished to have Stephen Langton.

This news made King John white with rage, and he declared that if Langton dared to set foot in England, the Pope should never again be allowed to meddle in the affairs of this

country. It was well for England that the Pope would not give way, for among the archbishops of Canterbury there has been none more upright, wise, and far-seeing than Stephen Langton.

The Pope knew that by forcing the king in this way he was doing a perilous thing; but he knew also that John was exceedingly fond of jewels. So he sent him a very splendid ring, in which a large number of gems were set; and with the ring he sent a letter explaining the meaning of the jewels, for each stone had a meaning according to its quality and its colour.

But fond though he was of such things, John was too angry now to be pacified with a trinket or a toy. He declared that Langton should never be archbishop; and the Pope resolved to make use of the awful weapon which the superstitious belief of the time placed in his hands.

He laid the kingdom of England under what is called an interdict (1208). This means that, from a certain day, all the churches should be closed, and all religious offices should cease, the clergy being allowed to do no more than to baptize infants, and to give absolution to the sick at the moment of death. No marriages could be celebrated, and the bodies of the

dead were to be buried without any funeral service in unconsecrated ground. Worse than all this was the misery caused by the belief that by the interdict the whole land was surrendered to the unrestrained power of evil spirits, and that the sacrifice, by which alone it was believed that the wrath of God could be appeased, might no longer be offered up.

There was wrong everywhere. The Pope had dealt a terrible blow at the king. The king, in his turn, did all that he could to injure the clergy. He seized the money which belonged to the bishops and abbots, and gave it to laymen; and he refused to punish those who wronged them. A man was brought before him for murdering a priest. The king ordered him to be let go, saying, 'He has rid me of one more of my enemies.'

Thus far the country had been under interdict; now the Pope attacked the king himself. John was excommunicated; and by this is meant that no Christian should have anything to do with him, and that all should shun him as they would shun leprosy, poison, or pestilence.

Even by this John was not at first very much frightened; and when the Archdeacon of Norwich said that he could not serve an excommunicated king, John ordered him to be clothed

in a coat of lead, and thrust into prison, where he died under the burden of his heavy garment.

But he began to think differently when some of his barons, with Stephen Langton at their head, met the French king, Philip Augustus, in a great assembly at Soissons. The bishops first declared that John was deposed, because he was not fit to govern, and then called on the French king and his people to take up arms against him.

Philip Augustus was in no way unwilling to do so. He gathered together an army as mighty as that of William the Conqueror for the invasion of England; and John on his side got ready a force not less powerful. But although his ships burnt some towns near the mouth of the Seine, he was really oppressed with fear, for he knew that he could not trust his own men.

He was, in fact, so driven mad with rage and terror, that he declared he would become a Mohammedan; and the story was spread abroad that he had sent a message to the Emir-al-Moumenin, or Caliph of the Mohammedans in Spain and Africa, offering to embrace his faith, and to hold the kingdom of England as his vassal.

This story, of course, is not true; for, foolish though John may have been, he yet knew that

such an alliance would arm all the princes of Christendom against him, and that he would never get the people of England to endure it. But the fact that it was widely believed may be taken as proof that John spoke of such a step as one which he would take if he could.

fabric, building	alliance, union
meshes, openings	unconsecrated, not set
appeased, lessened	apart
despot, a tyrannical ruler	constitutional, according
pestilence, disease	to law

treachery	strengthened	pacified	unrestrained
cowardice	tangled	superstitions	appeased
tyranny	acknowledged	interdict	terrible
injustice	perilous	absolution	excommunicated





KING JOHN AND THE BARONS.

PART I.

John's anxiety—The prophecy—Pandulph's picture of John's condition—John submits to the Pope—The deed of surrender—John takes the oath of fealty—Takes vengeance on the hermit—Pandulph orders the king of France to return—Philip's anger—Determines to take Flanders.

THE terrible interdict, and the excommunication which followed it, had brought King John to his wit's end. He could not appeal to his barons, he could not trust his people, he dared not face the French king. He could but try to make the Pope his friend, and so to gain the victory over his other enemies. He therefore sent some messengers to Rome; but although the Pope would not allow them to come into his presence, he sent a sub-deacon, named Pandulph, as his legate or envoy to England, with power to arrange matters with the king.

Pandulph found the king in a state of slavish terror. Three days only remained

before Ascension Day, and a hermit named Peter, whom the people revered as a very holy man, had declared that before Ascension Day should come, John would cease to reign.

Pandulph probably knew this, and when he was brought by two knights templars into his presence, he took care to draw a very dark picture of all the dangers by which he was surrounded. He told him of the vast army gathered under the standard of the French king. He warned him that of all his barons he could put faith in none, and that the French king had the names of all of them on a paper, praying him to come and deliver them from John's tyranny. He assured him that his only chance of safety lay in submitting himself to the grace and mercy of the Pope.

John's mind was at once made up. He resolved to throw himself at the Pope's feet, as a criminal who confessed his guilt and repented of his misdeeds. He promised more than a full recompense for all the wrongs which he had done to the Church, that is to say, to the clergy; and his submission was made on the vigil or eve of the Feast of the Ascension.

On that evening the Pope's legate appeared in all his pomp as a papal messenger in the Temple Church in London, and there King John placed in his hands the deed by which he

submitted himself and his kingdom absolutely to the Vicar of Christ.

This deed made it known to all men that, conscious of his iniquity and of his sins against the Church, and desiring to humble himself after



Cardinal legate in dress of 13th century:

the example of Him who for our sakes humbled Himself even unto death, he bestowed, and with the consent of his barons yielded to God, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to his lord Pope Innocent and his successors, all his kingdom of England, and all his kingdom of Ireland, to be held as a trust from the Holy See, for a yearly payment of a

thousand marks, in addition to the usual tribute of Peter's Pence. This surrender he declared perpetual; and he added, 'If any of our successors dare to annul our act, we declare him to have thereby forfeited his crown.'

On the next day, the day of the feast, John

took the oath of fealty, or faithfulness, to the Pope. 'I, John,' he said, 'by the grace of God, king of England and lord of Ireland, from this day forth and for ever, will be faithful to God and to the ever blessed Peter, and to the Church of Rome, and to my lord the Pope Innocent and to his catholic successors. I will save them harmless from any wrong of which I may know; I will warn them by myself, or by my trusty messengers, of any evil intended against them.'

Such was the oath which he swore, unarmed and kneeling, putting his hands within the hands of Pandulph, who was seated on his throne, as representing the spiritual sovereign, whose servant John declared himself. On the money which John offered as the tribute for his kingdom the legate put his foot in token of contempt.

This work being done, his first act was to take vengeance on the hermit Peter. He ordered him to be dragged at the tail of a horse, and hanged on a gibbet as a false prophet; and yet if Peter had delivered the prophecy, his words had come strictly true. By making himself the servant of the Pope, John had ceased to reign.

But for the present he had won the day. Pandulph went to the French king, told him that John was now the faithful servant of the

Pope, and warned him not to lift a finger against him or his kingdom.

‘What,’ cried Philip Augustus, ‘am I to bring together the finest army ever assembled under the French standard, and then to dismiss them at the Pope’s bidding? Are the nobles of France mere slaves, to be pushed hither and thither at his will?’ So he declared that he would still go on as he had begun; but when the Count of Flanders refused to go with him, he saw that the risk was too great.

His rage was now turned against the man who had thwarted him. ‘Either Flanders shall be France,’ he swore, ‘or France Flanders.’ But for all his loud words, the enterprise failed, and the great rival of King John was humbled. So were the waters of strife let out on every side.

tyranny, cruelty
absolutely, completely
perpetual, continual
forfeited, lost

vengeance, revenge
gibbet, gallows
thwarted, crossed
enterprise, undertaking

excommunication probably
sub-deacon surrounded
legate assured
ascension resolved

messenger spiritual
conscious sovereign
successors prophecy
annul representing



KING JOHN AND THE BARONS.

PART II.

John's tyranny—Langton complains—The barons also complain—
Demand redress—Take London—Conference at Runnymede—
The Great Charter—Its provisions—Applied only to a few—
John's rage—Pope aids him—War breaks out.

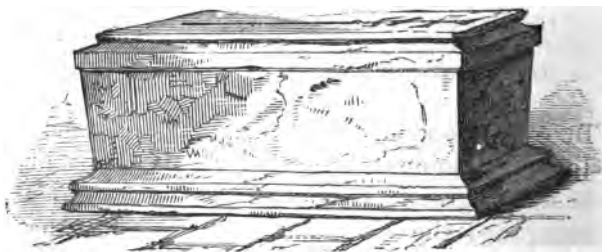
BUT the flood-gates were opened in England. John had submitted himself to the Pope, but he was as great a tyrant and as great a liar as ever; and the only difference now was that, whatever his evil deeds might be, he would in the Pope have one who would excuse or defend him.

Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, raised his voice against these iniquities; but the Pope's legate cared nothing for him. He could now place whom he would in the bishoprics and livings; and if any complained, he told them to go and plead their cause before the Pope at Rome, although he robbed them of the money which was needed to pay the costs of

their journey. The archbishop himself appealed ; but it was of no use. The Pope held up before him the fatal deed by which John had yielded up his kingdom to the successor of St. Peter.

But as the tyranny of the king grew heavier, the barons were more and more resolved on obtaining justice ; and Stephen Langton threw himself heartily into their cause.

To the Pope this made no difference. 'We must maintain,' he said, 'cost what it may, the



Langton's tomb, Canterbury Cathedral:

rights of a king who is our vassal, and we must put down his enemies.' The archbishop he rebuked as the secret ringleader in the rebellion of the barons ; and to the barons he declared that their complaints ought to be brought before himself, and that any league or compacts which they might make among themselves were of no force and of no value.

The tide, however, was too strong for the Pope to stem. The barons were resolved that they



The barons presenting Magna Charta to King John.

would guard themselves effectually against the king's despotism. They were thinking probably much more of themselves than of other classes of Englishmen ; but although the greater number of Englishmen were still in a state of slavery, the barons were not the only freemen in the land, and the rights which they won for themselves became in the end the inheritance of the whole body of their countrymen.

These demands would appear to us small indeed ; but on learning what they were, John burst into a furious rage. 'They might as well have asked me for my crown,' he said. 'Do they think that I am going to yield them liberties which will make me a slave ?'

The barons heeded him as little as Innocent had heeded him before. He tried in vain to prevail on them to submit the matter to his friend the Pope. They gained possession of London, and declared that they would treat as enemies all who would not join 'the army of God and of the holy Church.'

John saw that it would be dangerous to trifle with them further. He agreed to a conference, to be held on the flats of Runnymede, between Staines and Windsor ; and there the army of the king faced the army of the barons, while John put his hand to the Great Charter, promising at the same time that he would never obtain



Magna Charta Island.

from the Pope any paper which should interfere with or annul this solemn compact (1215).

This compact, known as the Great Charter,

gave the English no new liberties ; but it was a plain declaration that the system which William the Conqueror had set up was not to be allowed to over-ride those principles of justice by which Englishmen had been ruled before the Conquest.

These broad rules were, that the king should not tax his subjects without their consent, and that for all offences every man should be tried before his own peers, that is, before those who belonged to the same class with himself.

These rights were demanded, of course, only for those who were free ; the vast majority of Englishmen had then no rights at all before the law, and to these very little heed was taken. Many a long day was to pass yet before Englishmen were to learn that freedom and justice were blessings to which all without exception have an equal title.

John had promised. He fully intended to break his promise ; and he dissembled his rage only until the barons were out of his sight. He then burst into frantic curses, gnashing his teeth, rolling his eyes, and gnawing sticks and straws like a madman. His counsellors told him that instead of wasting time in such folly he would do better to devise some plan for revenge ; and, as luck would have it, the Pope was now ready to aid him in his falsehood and treachery.

'What!' he said, 'have the barons of England dared to dethrone a king who is a vassal of the Holy See, and who has put on the cross which lays him under pledge to fight for the Holy Land? We cannot suffer such a crime to go unpunished.' He declared the treaty to be both base and unlawful, and he pronounced the charter to be absolutely null and void.

Again there was war, and all the horrors of war were let loose again over the kingdom. Such power as John possessed he exercised by means of his hired troops of foreigners, who went through the country as cut-throats, smiting down the helpless and the poor, the young and the old, with impartial fierceness. To live in England was then like living in a fiery furnace; but, terrible though the sufferings of the people were, the cause of English freedom was not lost, and within a few years it was to make great strides onwards.

appealed, took the cause	annul, to make of no effect
to another	dissembled, cloaked, hid
vassal, servant	gnashing, grinding
compacts, agreements	void, worthless
null, of no effect	demand, claimed

submitted	resolved	slavery	interfere
iniquities	heartily	inheritance	liberties
yielded	rebellion	possession	principles
fatal	despotism	dangerous	exception



SIMON OF MONTFORT AT LEWES AND EVESHAM

PART I.

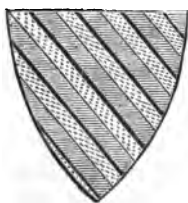
Henry III. like his father—Struggle carried on—Simon, Count of Toulouse—The Pope wishes to be rid of enemies in the Church—Massacre of the Albigensians—Simon of Montfort—Arbitration tried—Battle of Lewes—A council is held.

HENRY III. was a child nine years old when he became king; but when eight years later he was declared fit to govern, he showed himself an apt learner in his father's school of falsehood. He had not John's vices, nor did he take delight in extortion, cruelty, and oppression; but he knew how to break his word, and he saw that the employment of foreigners would be most useful in enabling him to do as he liked.

Thus it came about that the struggle of his father's reign was carried on through his own. The misgovernment of foreigners had become a burden too heavy to be borne; and a man whose father was a foreigner became the great

leader of the English barons in their quarrel with the king and his counsellors.

This was Simon of Montfort, Earl of Leicester, the husband of the king's sister Eleanor. His father, also called Simon, had joined the body of Crusaders who, instead of going to the Holy Land, turned aside (1204) to besiege and take Constantinople. Innocent III., who had



Arms of Simon de
Montfort.

humbled and then befriended King John, was still Pope, and he condemned sternly the wickedness of those who had thus, as he said, steeped in Christian blood the swords which ought to have been wielded against pagans and infidels.

He declared that the notion of crusades against heathen infidels was absurd, so long as there were infidels within the fold of the Church. In Italy many dared to doubt the authority of the Pope. In the beautiful countries of southern France not a few had cast it off altogether. They disliked the gloom and rigour of the system kept up by the priesthood; and their joyous and harmonious life marked them out as fit subjects for chastisement at the hands of the faithful.

Innocent ordered the Count of Toulouse to

drive out these heretics ; and on his failing to do so, he summoned the French king to his aid, beseeching him to listen to the voice of holy blood, and to stand up as a shield of the Church against a tyrant.

So the torrent burst on the fruitful valleys and bright cities of Languedoc, and Simon of Montfort hurried eagerly to the work of slaughter. The blood of the Albigensians was shed without mercy ; and the Pope's legate hounded on the Crusaders with the cry, 'Slay on, God will know His own !'

Simon was rewarded by becoming first Lord of Beziers, and afterwards Count of Toulouse. His son, though he was not guilty of these horrid crimes, was not altogether unlike his father. He had the same graces of person and the same charm of manner, the same prowess in knightly exercises and the same imperious disposition.

The circumstances of his life enlisted him on a very different side, and he so lived as to win the reputation of a righteous man, and to be revered after his death as a martyr and a saint. He became the leader of the barons when Henry tried to escape from the engagements imposed on him by the parliament which laid down the Provisions of Oxford, for the frequent summoning of representative assemblies.

After much disputing, both Henry and the barons agreed to submit to the decision of the French king; but the French king decided against the barons, and it soon became clear that the quarrel could be settled only by the sword.

On the 14th of May 1264, the troops of the king came into conflict with those of Simon of Montfort and the barons near Lewes. The battle was gained chiefly by the skill and energy of the Earl of Leicester, and lost in great part by the rashness of Prince Edward (afterwards Edward I.), who strayed away in chase of the Londoners, for whose blood he thirsted, it is said, as the hart desires the water-brooks.

The adherents of the king saw the need of coming to terms, and on the next day it was agreed to refer matters to a council, made up partly of English and partly of French nobles, the exclusion of foreigners from office in England, and some other points, being specially insisted on. Prince Edward was to remain with the barons as a hostage for the good faith of the king.

extortion, illegal compul-	imperious, commanding
sion to pay money	reverenced, paid respect to
pagans, heathens	representative, elected by
infidels, unbelievers	others

cruelty	crusades	heretics	assemblies
oppression	harmonious	torrent	decision
misgovernment	chastisement	valleys	adherents
wielded	beseeching	disposition	specially



SIMON OF MONTFORT AT LEWES AND EVESHAM.

PART II.

Principle of representation established—Simon's enemies—Prince Edward's escape—His army surrounds Montfort—Battle of Evesham—Miracles wrought at Montfort's tomb.

EARL Simon had won the victory, and risen to power ; but he showed himself on the whole less able to remedy abuses than to resist them. Still he did a great work when he caused the king to issue writs to the sheriffs requiring them to send from each county four knights, elected by the assent of the county, to treat with the king about matters which he would set before them. It was no light thing so to establish the principle of representation, through which a nation may govern itself by laws of its own making.

But the men who found a profit in the misgovernment of the king were bent on bringing about the downfall of Earl Simon, and they felt



The escape of Prince Edward.

that they had little chance of doing this unless Prince Edward were at their head. But Prince Edward was a prisoner on parole, that is, he was allowed to move about freely on his pledged faith that he would not escape.

Edward broke his word. Under the pretence of trying the paces of a horse which had just been given to him, he tired out the horses of the knights who were with him, and then mounting one which was fresh, rode off, crying out, 'Good-day, my lords; tell my father I shall soon see him out of ward.' Edward proved himself afterwards a great king; but his character is not raised by this lie.

Edward got together a large army, surprised Earl Simon's son, and then moved on against Earl Simon himself, with a wariness quite unlike the rash haste which had brought about his defeat at Lewes. He completely surrounded the forces of De Montfort, who could not help admiring the skill which was to bring about his own overthrow. 'By the arm of St. James,' he said, 'they come on well. It is from me that they have learned that order. Now let us commend our souls to God, for our bodies are our enemies.'

The conflict which followed was scarcely so much a battle as a slaughter, in which the victims showed undaunted courage and perse-

verance. When the issue of the fight became certain, Earl Simon still fought on at desperate odds; and to those who shouted to him to yield himself a prisoner, he answered: 'Never will I surrender to dogs and perjurers.'



Old houses at Evesham:

So ended the battle of Evesham (1265). The bodies of the slain barons were buried in the abbey of that place; that of De Montfort alone was hacked and mutilated, but the monks buried the trunk in front of the high altar, and the long

series of miracles performed at his tomb began, we are told, at once. A list of 212 cures so wrought has been preserved to us. It shows at the least how deeply the people revered the character of the man who had cheerfully yielded up his life in defence of the principle of 'England for the English.'

remedy, cure	undaunted, fearless
pretence, show, make-believe	desperate, very great
wariness, great care	mutilated, maimed, cut in pieces

abuses	government	completely	surprised
sheriffs	parole	surrounded	scarcely
principle	pledged	reverenced	establish
representation	character	perjurers	surrender





EDWARD THE FIRST AND WILLIAM WALLACE.

Edward wishes Great Britain to be under one king—What he said about it—Possibly true—Pleas worth nothing—Our ideas of the matter—Wallace flees to the woods—How he became known—Defeats the Earl of Surrey—Battle of Falkirk—Surrender of the governor of Stirling Castle—Wallace taken prisoner—His trial and execution.

IN spite of the long struggle which the barons had been compelled to maintain against King John and his son Henry III., the growth of the English nation is shown in the great efforts made by Edward I. to bring the whole of Britain under his dominion, and by the measure of success which he achieved both in Wales and in Scotland.

How far he was justified in the claims which he made upon either, is a question which it is in one sense very difficult to answer, and in another sense very easy. The king of England declared that the Scottish and Welsh princes had in times long past sworn fealty to

kings who were then seated on the English throne; and it will make little difference if we allow that the facts may have been as he said they were.

It is quite possible that Scottish and Welsh princes may have declared themselves the 'men' of English sovereigns, and pleas very good in law might be drawn from those admissions, if those admissions were in themselves worth anything.

So long as a country is in the hands of a



Penny of Edward I.

despot, these pleas may be worth a good deal; but in proportion as the people of the land are awakened to

the need of self-government, they lose their value; and we should say that any engagement by which an English king or queen should now admit the superiority of any other sovereign would be in itself null and void. We should not allow their right to make the engagement, and we should say that it had no more force than the oath which William the Conqueror made Harold swear over the chest of relics at Rouen.

We can therefore read the story of King Edward's achievements in Wales and in Scotland

without forming any foolish notions of the superiority of one set of people to another. None of the actors in these old stories were altogether upright, straightforward, and honest. The Welsh chief may have tried to escape an obligation which he allowed to be a real one, but King Edward did not scruple to tempt by a bribe the faith of the Welsh king's brother.

So the struggle went on with more or less of craft, fraud, and treachery, as well as violence, on both sides, until it ended in the way in which it was best for the happiness of all within the island that it should end. It is quite certain that such a country as Great Britain could not be split up into three kingdoms, hostile to each other, without causing constant and fearful misery.

But it was scarcely to be expected that either Welshmen or Scotchmen should see this in the days of William the Conqueror or even of Edward I., while it was very natural that they should regard those who professed to defend



Banner of Edward I.

their rights with great reverence. This was the case with the Scottish champion known as Sir William Wallace, who betook himself to the woods, as some said, from a sense of burning wrongs done to his countrymen by the English king. For some time he and the followers whom he got together lived as best they could, until the issue of a chance fight, in which the sheriff of Lanarkshire was killed, made his name more widely known. Others then rose up against the English, or against those who favoured the English in different parts of the land; and all these joined their forces, and so made up a large army.

Wallace's next success was over the Earl of Surrey, whom Edward I. had left as guardian of the kingdom. The earl foolishly allowed his men to cross over a stream by a bridge on which only two could move abreast; and when some four or five thousand had so crossed, Wallace ordered his own army, which was immensely larger, to march down and slaughter them.

But Wallace underwent a defeat as signal as this victory when Edward himself advanced against him. In the battle of Falkirk (1298) from twenty to forty thousand Scotchmen, it is said, were slain; but however this may have been, the career of Wallace as a general was at an end. He went back to his forests, although



Surrender of Stirling Castle to Edward I.

he was invited, like all the other Scottish chiefs, to throw himself on Edward's favour, and Edward's behaviour to the governor of Stirling Castle shows that he would have been honourably treated.

For ninety days the governor of Stirling Castle had foiled the efforts of the English king, who was moreover exposed to great danger during the siege. And when at length further resistance became impossible, the governor with twenty-five men went down, barefooted, and with ropes round their necks, to pray for Edward's favour.

'I have no favour for you,' was his answer; 'you must surrender at my pleasure.' On their assenting he then said, 'My pleasure is that you be hanged as traitors.'

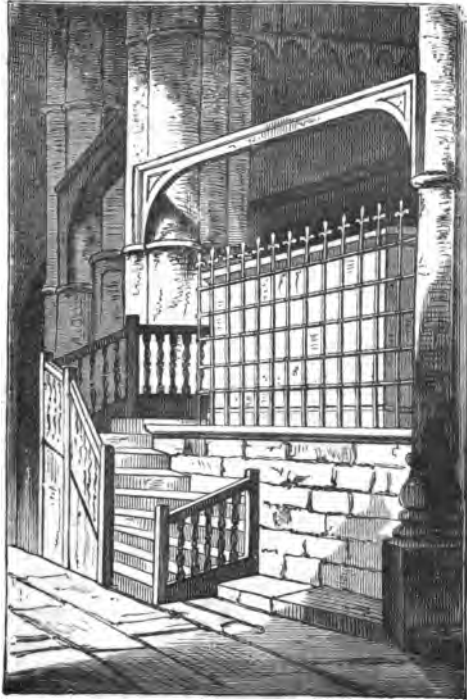
'Sir,' replied the governor, 'we admit our guilt, our lives are in your hands.'

'And what do you say?' he asked, turning to the rest. When all allowed that they were guilty, Edward ordered them to be taken as prisoners, but not in chains, to England.

Wallace did not remain long at large. His place of hiding was betrayed by one of his followers to the governor of Dumbarton, who surprised him in his bed (1305).

Wallace was taken to London, and tried in Westminster Hall, for treason, murder,

and robbery. The two last charges he admitted, the first he denied ; and it must be allowed that he was justified in denying it. He had never ad-



Tomb of Edward I.

mitted the authority of the English king, or sworn fealty to him, or accepted any offer from him.

But this denial availed him nothing. He was condemned most unjustly to suffer as a traitor, the punishment which some hold that he deserved as a murderer ; and so he became to his countrymen a martyr and a hero, who might, as they thought, have achieved the independence of the land, if the factions and jealousies of the nobles had not foiled his efforts and delivered him over to the power of his enemies.

dominion, power
achieved, performed
scruple, fear
treason, rebellion
issue, result

behaviour, conduct
betrayed, given up treach-
erously
factions, divisions, parties
fealty, faithfulness

traitor
difference
admission
condemned

proportion
awakened
engagement
independence

superiority
achievements
treachery
jealousies

violence
thieving
authority
justified





EDWARD OF CARNARVON.

Edward II.'s weak reign—Story of the massacre of the bards—Story of his being made Prince of Wales—Employs foreigners—Battle of Bannockburn—Edward's ignorance of English laws—He is deposed—His friends request him to resign—What followed—Imprisoned in Berkeley Castle—Is murdered.

THE story of the life of Edward II. is a story of pitiable weakness, coming between the splendid reign of his father and the scarcely less splendid reign of his son.

The circumstances of his birth seemed to promise for him a great career. He was born (1284) just when Edward I. had conquered the Welsh. Their prince, Llewellyn, had been slain, and the only chief who held out after his death was caught and hung as a traitor; but Edward remained for some time in the country, because he wished to bring it into order, and to win the favour of the people to a rule which he hoped might be for their good.

Two tales are told to us about this time, one of which is certainly not true, and the other may be untrue also.

The first is that Edward knew how great a power national songs have over a people which has been deprived of its freedom, and how much influence especially the Welsh bards had over their countrymen. He therefore, it is said, gathered them into one place, and there had them all murdered. This would not be a likely way to win the favour of the Welsh. But no trustworthy historian of the time knows anything of this savage deed, about which Grey has written a very noble poem, describing the vengeance denounced on Edward I. by a bard who is supposed to have escaped the massacre.

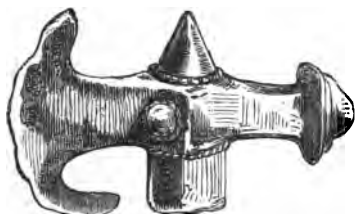
The other story is that as the Welsh prince, Llewellyn, had been killed, Edward determined to put in his place his own infant son, who from his birthplace was called Edward of Carnarvon. To please the Welsh, therefore, he said that he would give them a prince who was a Welshman by birth and who could speak no other language; and so saying, he presented to them the babe who had been lately born at Carnarvon.

This act seems to us a jest scarcely worthy of such a man as the first Edward; but it is certain

that the young child was made prince of Wales, and that from that day to this the principality of Wales has furnished the title of the eldest son of the sovereign of England.

The reign of this prince when he came to the throne was full of humiliations and disasters. He would insist on doing that which had brought Henry III. into so much trouble; and his employment of foreigners, whom he loaded with his favours, brought about his ruin.

The Scottish king refused to hold the kingdom of Scotland as his vassal; and the great army which Edward led to punish him was defeated utterly at Bannockburn.



Battle-axe found at Bannockburn.

But Edward probably did not know how much power the laws of England gave to the English king, and how much power the people of England would allow him to exercise. He fancied, it would seem, that somehow or other he would be able to put down those who opposed his follies, and so to do as he liked.

He found that he had made a miserable mistake. His wife was a worthless woman,

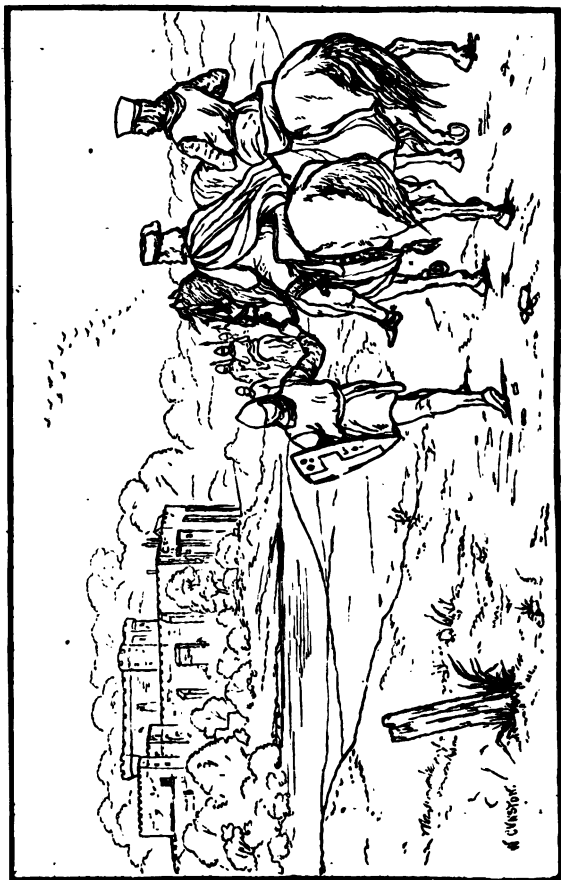
who did all that she could to turn his subjects against him, not because she cared for good government, but because she wished to rule the country herself; and she was able to make war on the king by professing to fight against his favourite Hugh Spenser.

The king fled; but before he surrendered himself, a parliament had declared that by his absence he had left the kingdom without a ruler, and a little while later another parliament set up his son Edward as king in his father's place. But his father had not yet resigned his office as king, nor had he been deposed. So now he was charged with having broken his coronation oath, as well as with other offences, and the parliament solemnly decided that he had ceased to reign (1327).

The rest of the story is wretched indeed. His wife pretended to be overwhelmed with grief for his misfortunes, and prayed her son to refuse a crown which still belonged of right to his father. So his friends resolved on going through the farce of making Edward yield up his power and title of his own free will.

What passed when these men found their way to the presence of the poor weak king, we do not exactly know. According to some, Edward declared that no act of his could be thought free

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Edward II. taken prisoner to Berkeley Castle.

so long as he remained a prisoner. Others said that he submitted himself to the parliament, thanking them for bestowing the crown on a member of his family, and that on hearing these words the steward of his household broke his staff of office, as he always does when the sovereign dies.

But the wicked queen was still full of fears. She heard that in many parts of England the people thought her husband grossly ill-used, and that they were preparing to set him on the throne again, and so she resolved that he should die. He was placed in the charge of the Lord of Berkeley, and taken to Berkeley Castle. Lord Berkeley was not there himself, being laid up by illness at his manor of Bradley; and during his absence Edward was left in the hands of two officers, named Thomas Gurney and William Ogle.

Late one night the inmates of the castle were startled by piercing screams, which came from Edward's chamber. In the morning the people of the neighbourhood were invited to come and look at his dead body. The twisted features of his face showed that he had died in fearful pain; but how his death had been brought about was never clearly known, although it was said that a red-hot iron had been thrust into his bowels. No search was made into the

matter, and his body was laid in the church of St. Peter's Abbey, in Gloucester.

historian, a recorder of events	deposed, publicly driven from the throne
denounced, declared publicly	overwhelmed, overcome
humiliations, debasing acts	grossly, very badly
disasters, accidents	farce, a play which causes laughter

career	vengeance	principality	professing
deprived	massacre	employment	resigned
especially	scarcely	foreigners	piercing





THE FIGHT AT CRECY (A.D. 1346).

Edward III. claims the French crown—The claim worthless—Army taken to France—Wastes the country—The passage of the Somme—Reaches Crecy—Order of battle—State of the French army—The fight—The archers—Black Prince asks help—The blind king—The close of the battle.

EDWARD III. chose to begin with the French king a war which lasted, with some breaks, for about a hundred years. He said that the French crown was his own by right, as he was the son of the daughter of a French king whose son, if he had one, would have been king; but in France there was a law, called the Salic law, which did not allow a woman to succeed to the throne, or to hand on to her sons a power which she could not exercise herself.

The claim, therefore, according to French law, was worthless; but the mere fact that Edward could make it shows how little he had learnt the lesson, enforced by the career of his own father, that the choice of a sovereign lay really with the people; and he never thought of the grievous

wrong which he was doing to all Frenchmen by trying to force himself upon them as their king.

So, as if he were going to a great tournament, in which gallant knights were to show their bravery and skill by brilliant feats of arms,



Edward III.

Edward landed his army on French ground ; but his army was made up not of Normans, but of Englishmen, and he had come as an English king to secure an inheritance which belonged, as he said, to the wearer of the English crown.

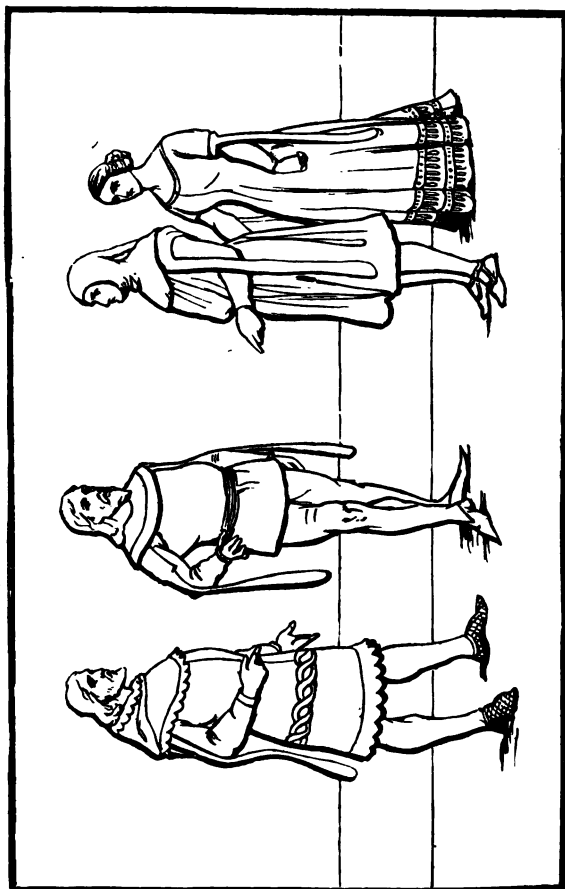
The English now looked on themselves as a

conquering, not as a conquered, people ; but it was a miserable thing that they should be ready to lend themselves to unjust schemes, which must bring misery to a people who had done them no wrong.

For, in truth, Edward carried wretchedness wherever he went. He plundered the towns and wasted the country as he marched along the valley of the Seine. He hoped that he might be able at once to fight a battle which should crush the power of the French king, and perhaps leave him a prisoner in his hands.

But the French king, Philip, thought that the farther Edward marched the more difficult his way would be ; and, in truth, Edward found himself in almost desperate straits, with the river Somme before him and the French army, numbering nearly ten to one of his own men, behind him. He could not cross by the bridges, for these were all strongly guarded ; but a peasant told him of a ford which they could cross at low water.

When the English reached it the tide had not gone down enough ; but at length they were able to plunge into the stream, in which they had to fight with the French warriors, who had been stationed on the opposite bank. The struggle was decided, not by the knights on their horses, but by the English archers,



Civil costume, time of Edward III.

who shot over their heads into the French ranks ; and this was a sign that real power was passing away from knights and nobles into the hands of the people.

At last the passage was forced, and Edward was le to march on to Crecy, where he posted his army on the sloping ground near the little town. The French king had hurried to the ford after him ; but the tide had come in again when he reached it, and he was obliged to go round by Abbeville.

This gave Edward time to rest his men, and to prepare for the battle which he was determined to fight as soon as he could. 'We will go no farther,' he said ; 'I am now in the country which belongs to me by my mother's right, and it is my duty to defend it against my enemies.'

There that evening he gave a supper to the earls and barons of his army ; and the next morning he arranged his troops in three divisions, one of which was under the command of the Prince of Wales, a lad now fourteen years old, assisted by the Earls of Warwick and Northampton. Mounted on a small white horse, he then rode along the ranks, speaking, the chronicler Froissart tells us, so cheerfully that all who had been dispirited were comforted by his countenance and his words.

He himself looked forward with confidence to the fight. He knew that he was strongly posted, and he knew probably that his own men, though much fewer in number, were better trained and drilled than those of the French king. As it so turned out, his safety lay in the multitude of his enemies.

The French army was, in truth, utterly unwieldy, and it came up tired out with long marching. To weary and hungry men the day itself seemed to forebode disaster. The sun happened to be eclipsed ; the air was filled with frightened birds, which flew screaming over their heads ; and then the rain fell in torrents.

At five in the afternoon the sun broke out again brilliantly ; but it shone full in the faces of the French, dazzling and almost blinding them, while the English had it at their backs. The battle began. The hired archers in the French army found that the rain had soaked their bow-strings, and made them almost useless.

The English had kept their bows in canvas cases, and had them all in good trim ; and the aim of the English bowmen was so sure, and their shooting so rapid, that the hired archers opposed to them threw down their weapons and fled.

Then followed the struggle of knights and

horsemen, fighting hand to hand ; and so hardly pressed were the English with the young Prince



Ancient crossbow.

of Wales, that a message was sent to entreat King Edward to send them help.

‘Is my son dead,’ he asked, ‘or is he



Messenger imploring help for the Black Prince.

unhorsed, or so wounded that he cannot stand ?' 'No,' answered the messenger. 'Then,' replied the king, 'let the boy win his spurs! I am resolved, if it please God, that the honour and glory of this day shall belong to my son, and to those who have the care of him.'

While the knights fought, the English archers were sending the fatal showers of their arrows on the French hosts ; and there is little more to say of the battle than that it soon became mere carnage.

'Lead me into the fight,' said the blind old King of Bohemia, who was with the French king, 'that I too may have a stroke at the English.' Two knights tied the bridle of his horse with their own bridles ; and riding forward, all three were immediately cut down.

The sun set ; the summer night grew dark ; and still the work of slaughter went on, till under the cover of the darkness the remnants of the French host left the ground. On meeting his son the king kissed him, and prayed that he might have grace to persevere as he had begun. The boy had fought in black armour, and hence he was known afterwards always as the Black Prince.

The field was loaded with dead, and Edward was obliged to give a truce of three days for the clearing of the ground. 'What do you

think of a battle?' he asked his son, as they walked together over the field. 'Is it a pleasant game?' We should be tempted to say that he did look on slaughter as good sport, if we may judge from the massacre of Limoges.

tournament, military en-	carnage, bloodshed
counter for sport	countenance, looks
feats of arms, clever deeds	unwieldy, unmanageable
with weapons	eclipsed, hidden
desperate straits, great	remnants, remains
difficulties	truce, peace

exercise	guarded	probably	resolved
brilliant	opposite	disaster	persevere
wretchedness	chronicler	soaked	slaughter
peasant	confidence	opposed	massacre





THE BLACK PRINCE AT POITIERS.

Renewal of the quarrel with France—Edward makes an offer—
Renewal of outrages on its being refused—Philip determines
to attack Edward—Cardinal of Perigord tries to mediate—
Preparation for battle—The fight—The banquet afterwards—
Black Prince joins Don Pedro—His disposition is changed—
Massacre at Limoges.

TEN years after the fight of Crecy, the Black Prince fought the battle of Poitiers (1356). If we look at it in the way of mere fighting, it was an exploit just as brilliant as the rout at Crecy. Eight thousand men under the prince's standard defeated utterly a host of more than fifty thousand which King John of France led to the assault.

The glory of soldiers seldom fails to be duly acknowledged. But we must not forget that Edward's quarrel with the French king was from the beginning an unjust one; and after the victory of Crecy it had been renewed on unjust grounds.

King Edward had offered to give up his

claims on the French crown if the French king would yield his claim of homage from the English king for his domains in France. This means that, giving up an unjust claim, Edward should become the independent sovereign of countries which, for every reason, should form part of France, as Yorkshire and Somersetshire should belong to the kingdom of England.

The offer was refused, and the flood-gates of theft, violence, and murder were once more opened wide. The Black Prince set out from Bordeaux, with his army split up into three divisions, that they might the more easily ravage and lay waste a larger extent of country.

If we are to believe Froissart, the English and the Gascons behaved in a way worthy of Ghenghiz Khan or Attila. Destroying everything as they passed along, they stopped for seven days in every well-provisioned town, and having eaten and drunk to the full, wasted all the food which was left, burning the wheat and the oats, and staving the heads of the wine casks.

Hearing that after this marauding hunt the Black Prince was on his way back to Bordeaux, the French king determined to catch him on the road. But as a general he was no better than his father Philip; and his attack on

the English army was of no more use than the beating of the sea-waves on a break-water.

In the midst of all the horrors of this unrighteous and murderous strife, it is something to learn that one man at least could be found who was appalled at its wickedness, and did his best to stop it. The Cardinal of Perigord hastened to King John, and besought his leave to settle matters peaceably with the Black Prince.

It was Sunday morning, and after mass the French king was eager to begin the fight ; but he granted a truce for that day while the cardinal hurried to and fro on his errand of mercy. His pains went for nothing, because King John insisted that the Black Prince and a hundred knights should yield themselves up as prisoners, and the Black Prince would not hear of it. The cardinal went back with a heavy heart to Poitiers ; but his act placed him in the number of merciful men whose names shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

The picture of the fight which followed is not one on which it is of much use to look long. The Black Prince, we are told, knelt down and prayed ; and as the words of his prayer are given, we must suppose that he uttered them aloud. He prayed that he and his might be preserved from



Military accoutrements of the Black Prince, suspended over his tomb at Canterbury.

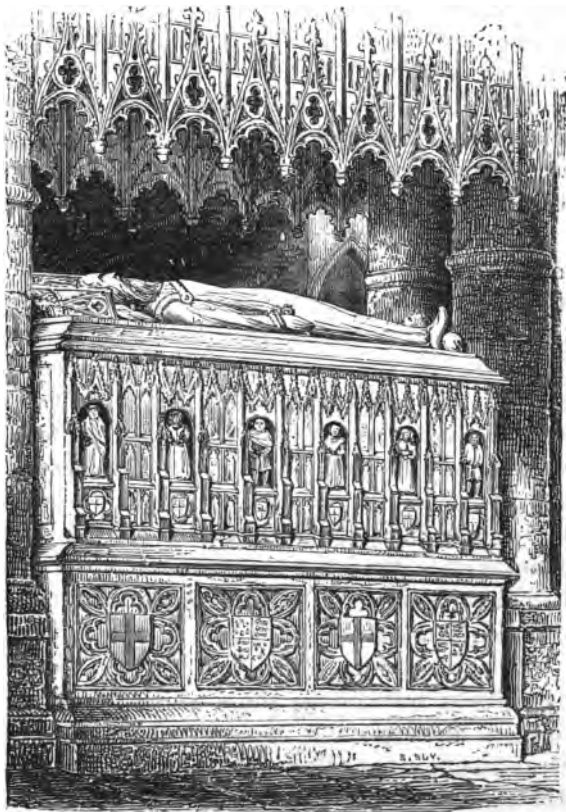
all hurt, adding, 'Thou knowest that I have a good cause.'

King John might have said this, perhaps, with slightly better reason ; but although it may be well to know what the Black Prince said, we must not allow ourselves to be deceived by words which can scarcely have deceived even himself.

As to the battle, the English here, as at Crecy, stood on the top of a small hill, up which led a narrow road with high hedges on either side. Up this lane the French horsemen strove in vain to force a passage. The English knights barred the way at the other end, and from behind them the archers shot their deadly hail of arrows with unerring skill. Men and horses fell, writhing and struggling in one huge mass, which only became huger as those in the rear pressed onwards.

At last the English horsemen, who remained fresh, rushed down on that part of the field where the French king was fighting. After a terrible struggle John was compelled to yield himself a prisoner, and was taken to a tent of crimson cloth, in which the prince and his knights were drinking wine after the toil and heat of the battle.

In the evening the prince gave a supper to his royal prisoner. He refused, although the



Tomb of Edward III. in Westminster Abbey.

French king earnestly pressed him, to sit at the same table with his guest. He was not worthy of such an honour, he said, at the hands of one who had shown himself so valiant a knight as he had shown himself that day. 'I do not say this to flatter you,' he added ; 'all on our side who saw agree with me, and award you the prize of bravery.'

This was the way in which men whom we might be tempted now to call slaughterers then addressed each other for their prowess in what King Edward called the pleasant game of war.

Another ten years passed away, and then (1366) the Black Prince became the ally of Don Pedro, king of Spain, very rightly called the Cruel for his wanton and horrible murders. This monster was hated by his people, and had not a single friend elsewhere ; but as he asked the aid of the Black Prince, the latter thought probably that by helping him he might strengthen himself against the king of France.

So he went into Spain, and there performed exploits as brilliant as those which he had performed already ; but he came back with his treasure-chest empty and his health shattered. He came back, indeed, changed in every way. He had been light-hearted and gay, as well as fearless ; he now became sullen, gloomy, and irritable, and such excuse as may be got from

this may be pleaded for the frightful crime of which he was guilty at Limoges.

This city had been betrayed to the French by its bishop, and the Black Prince swore that he would take a terrible vengeance. He kept his word. When at length, after an obstinate siege, a breach was made in the walls, he issued an order that none were to be spared, man, woman, or child. Men, women, and children, says Froissart, cast themselves on their knees at his feet, entreating for mercy. He spurned them from him, and all were slain.

exploit, heroic deed
marauding, robbing
appalled, terrified
deceived, cheated

huger, greater
prowess, valour
shattered, broken
irritable, easily made angry

brilliant
acknowledged
renewed
independent

well-provisioned
unrighteous
peaceably
remembrance

unerring
valiant
bravery
strengthened

obstinate
entreating
breach
horrible





RICHARD II. AND THE MEN OF KENT.

PART I.

War meant misery for the people—General discontent—Clergymen urge redress—What the people wanted—Allowances should be made—English language not like French—London citizens promise help—The poll tax—Tyler's rebellion—Message to the king—He meets them.

IT is not likely that the pleasant game of war, as it had been played by Edward the Third and his son the Black Prince, would add to the contentment and the happiness of the people of England or of France. The game was one which might sometimes bring wealth ; but this wealth went into the hands of the lords and the knights. More commonly it brought with it heavy taxation for all, and misery and poverty for the great mass of the people.

The victories of Crecy and Poitiers had been won really by the archers ; but when the archers returned to their homes, many of them sank into the body of serfs or villeins, men

held in bond service, with no more freedom of movement than the beasts of the field.

Nor was it among the serfs or villeins only that the leaven of discontent at the existing state of things was fermenting. There was a great upheaving going on, not in England alone, but in many of the countries of Europe, when Richard, the son of the Black Prince, a child only ten years old, was placed on the English throne (1377).

In this country a great effort was made to bring about changes on a well-digested plan. The patience of the bondmen was clearly tired out, and they were ready to listen to advice, not all of which perhaps was given from a sincere wish to promote their welfare. No doubt it was startling for the rulers to learn that some clergymen had been showing the countrymen from the Bible that their wrongs ought to be redressed.

'We are all children of Adam and Eve,' they said; 'but our masters are clothed in velvet and silk, and feast on rich fare and spiced wines, while we have toil and trouble, and must face wind, wet, and cold. There must be no more serfdom; we will not be treated like beasts.' But all this terrible talk was followed by the simple words, 'If we must work for our masters, we ought to be paid for it.' So that

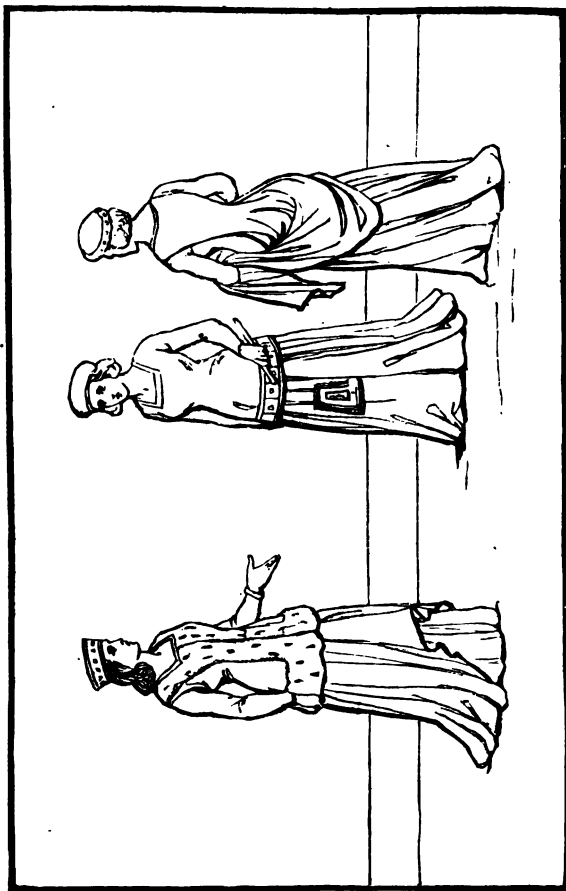
what these poor people wanted after all was merely a fair day's wage for a fair day's labour.

No doubt, also, the feeling of oppression and misery was rousing in many minds a desire for revenge; but if we are to make allowance for knights and nobles who fought against their kings, we ought also to make allowance for bondmen and peasants who rose against their feudal lords, not a few of whom were tyrants of the worst kind. The wrongs done by both should be set forth clearly and weighed fairly.

We should mark, too, that the language of the papers which the leaders of the common people sent about was very different from the language even of the wealthy citizens of the towns. It had very few French words mixed up with it, and was, in truth, very little changed from the English spoken in the time of King Harold. Here is a paper written by the priest John Ball:—

'John Ball greeteth you well all, and doth you to understand, he has rung your bell. Now right and might, will and skill. Stand manly together in truth. If the end be well, then is all well.'

The citizens of London had promised to open the gates of the city to the men of Essex, if they would come and lay their wrongs before King Richard, who was now a lad fourteen



Ladies' costumes, time of Richard II.

years of age. Both citizens and peasants thought that he would do what they wanted according to the laws and both hoped that there would be no need of any violence.

But such movements are often hurried on in an unforeseen way; and so it was now. In 1381 the parliament decreed that a yearly tax of twelve pence should be levied on every one, man and woman alike, after fifteen years of age. This poll-tax was levied with due decency on the powerful and the rich: it was not so levied in the houses of the poorer sort, and at Dartford a tiler smote down a tax-gatherer who dared to ill-treat a child whom her mother declared to be under the taxable age.

The men of Western Kent now rose in rebellion, and at Maidstone they made Walter the tiler, commonly known as Wat Tyler, their leader. When they reached Blackheath their host is said to have numbered a hundred thousand men.

To this vast multitude John Ball preached a sermon, taking for his text the couplet,—

‘When Adam delved and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman?’

They had come, they said, to see the king, and by him they looked to have all their wrongs set right. On their march to Blackheath they

had made prisoner a knight and his two sons. They kept the sons as hostages, and sent the knight to King Richard to tell him that they must see him, as they had that to say to him which they could not say through another.

The Archbishop of Canterbury advised him to have nothing to do with shoeless scoundrels; but the king bade the knight tell the people that if they would on the next morning come to the bank of the Thames, he would there speak with them.

At the fixed time the royal barge approached the shore. 'Here I am,' said the king; 'what do you want?'

'We want you to come ashore, and then we will tell you the answer.'

Here the Earl of Salisbury broke in, 'You are not fitly ordered or rightly clad for the king's presence.'

leaven, seed
fermenting, working
well-digested, well thought
out

serfdom, slavery
scoundrels, rascals
clad, clothed
violence, wrong-doing

taxation
discontent
patience

clergymen
oppression
peasants

unforeseen
decency
taxable

rebellion
shoeless
hostages



RICHARD II. AND THE MEN OF KENT.

PART II.

March to London—Set fire to Savoy Palace—Threaten to storm the Tower—King accedes to their wishes—Meeting at Smithfield—Tyler is killed—Richard's courage—Breaks his word—He is dethroned—And murdered.

THE barge shot back towards the Tower of London. On seeing this, the troop which had come to the Thames went back to the multitude at Blackheath, and told them how things had gone. At once the cry rose, 'To London, to London. Let us go to London.' On this march, as on the march to Blackheath, they used some violence. They destroyed some manor-houses; but they took no plunder, and for all food they scrupulously paid.

The gates of the city were thrown open at their demand, and after satisfying their hunger, they rushed to the Savoy, the palace of the Duke of Lancaster, whom they hated

as one of the worst of their oppressors. To this they set fire, but they took nothing for themselves, and one man who was found with a silver cup hidden in his coat was thrown with the cup into the Thames.

The next morning they declared that if the king would not come out to meet them, they would storm the Tower, and kill all whom they found within it. The king sent a message to say that he would not fail to meet them, if they would leave the city and go to Mile-end. The greater number obeyed ; but no sooner, it would seem, had he left the Tower than a body of the insurgents forced their way in, seized the Archbishop of Canterbury; and put him to death, with two or three others.

Meanwhile, Richard had reached Mile-end, and there, riding boldly forward, he said, 'Good people, I am your king; what do you want?'

'Our freedom,' they shouted; 'freedom for ourselves, our children, and our goods. We will not be called serfs any more, nor will we live in bondage.'

'I grant it,' answered the king. 'You shall forthwith have letters under my seal which shall secure to you all that you have asked. I pardon all that you have done thus far. Go quietly to your homes.'

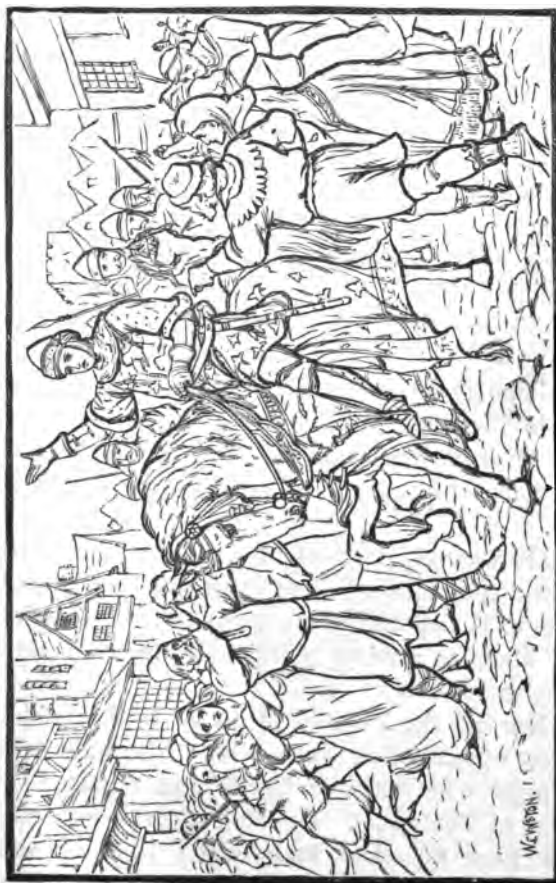
The letters were written, were signed, sealed, and sent to the envoys of the insurgents, who went, leaving Wat Tyler, John Ball, and others, who said that they would not depart until they had better surety of the good faith of the king. Richard agreed to meet them in Smithfield. He came to them attended by the Lord Mayor, Sir William Walworth, and a guard of nobles and knights, and sent a messenger to say that the leaders of the people had nothing to do but to come and tell him of their grievances.

Wat Tyler advanced alone, and with scant courtesy, perhaps, laid the demands of the peasants before the king. The story tells us, that while he spoke he held his hand on his dagger, and that when he seized the bridle of the king's horse, the Lord Mayor stuck a short dagger into his throat, that he rode off a few yards, fell, and was immediately murdered (1381).



Autograph of Richard II.
Earliest known royal
signature.

Then followed the scene in which Richard is said to have displayed such marvellous courage. On the one side we have the peasants crying out, 'They have slain our leader; let us kill them all.' On the other we have the young king riding up to them and saying, 'I am your



Richard II. in Smithfield.

leader, I am your king ; follow me, and I will give you all that you ask for.'

The glory of his courage is somewhat dimmed, if, as seems likely, the words were uttered only to deceive and cheat the insurgents. That Wat Tyler should go forward alone, if he intended to do the king any harm, is past all belief. It is also certain that Richard broke his pledged word, and revoked the charters which he had signed and sealed, rivetting the chains which by his solemn promise were to be broken for ever.

Some twenty years later the evil days came upon Richard, not from the wrath of peasants, who had no one to speak for them, but from a parliament whose control he had sought to shake off.

He was still in the bloom of early manhood, when the national council solemnly declared him to be degraded from the state and authority of king, as having notoriously deserved that punishment.

Nor did the likeness of his lot to that of his great-grandfather end here. The midnight slaughter in Berkeley Castle was repeated in that of Pontefract. Of the manner of his death we have no clear knowledge ; that he was foully murdered there is no doubt. The penalty of dethronement, pronounced by the parliament,

could not satisfy the man who succeeded him as Henry IV.

manor-houses, residences of the owners of the land scrupulously, very care- fully	insurgents, rebels grievances, wrongs revoked, repealed barge, boat
--	--

multitude violence satisfying	surety messenger courtesy	immediately marvellous deceive	rivetting parliament dethronement
-------------------------------------	---------------------------------	--------------------------------------	---





NORMAN KINGS.

	Began to reign.	Ceased to reign.
William I. (<i>The Conqueror</i>), . . .	1066	1087
William II. (<i>Rufus</i>), . . .	1087	1100
Henry I. (<i>Beauclerc</i>), . . .	1100	1135
Stephen (<i>of Blois</i>), . . .	1135	1154

PLANTAGENET KINGS.

Henry II. (<i>Plantagenet</i>), . . .	1154	1189
Richard I. (<i>Cœur-de-Lion, or the Lion- hearted</i>), . . .	1189	1199
John (<i>Lackland</i>), . . .	1199	1216
Henry III.	1216	1272
Edward I. (<i>Longshanks</i>), . . .	1272	1307
Edward II.,	1307	1327
Edward III.,	1327	1377
Richard II.,	1377	1399



PRINCIPAL EVENTS.

	A.D.
Robert joined the Crusades,	1096
Anselm made archbishop,	1093
Anselm left the country,	1097
Henry I. became king, instead of Robert, who was in Palestine,	1100
Battle of Tenchebrai, in which Robert was taken prisoner, and afterwards confined in Cardiff Castle,	1106

In the reign of Stephen civil war raged throughout England ; several battles were fought, and the nobles who were allowed to build castles treated the people very cruelly, 1135-1154

Henry II.'s reign is chiefly noted for the quarrels between the king and Thomas à Becket, and for the conquest of Ireland, which took place in 1171

166 STORIES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

Richard I. joined the Third Crusade, which had for its object the deliverance of the Holy Land from the Saracens, . . .	A.D. 1190
He was taken prisoner, and only released by the English paying a heavy ransom, .	1198
During John's reign several important events happened, the chief being :—	
(1.) The loss of Normandy, . . .	1203
(2.) The quarrel as to the election of Stephen Langton to the arch- bishopric of Canterbury, .	1207—1212
(3.) The signing of the Magna Charta, .	1215
<hr/>	
Henry III.'s reign is noted for the growing power of the people, led by Simon de Montfort.	
The House of Commons was founded in this reign,	1265
<hr/>	
Edward I. conquered Wales,	1282
He interfered in the affairs of Scotland, and defeated the Scotch in	1296
And again in	1298
Wallace was executed in	1305
<hr/>	
Edward II. was a weak king.	
The influence gained in Scotland by Edward I. was entirely lost. English defeated at Bannockburn,	1314

STORIES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY. 167

He was dethroned and murdered in Berkeley Castle in	A.D. 1327
Edward III. resembled Edward I. He was successful in his government at home and in his wars abroad.	
French fleet defeated at Sluys,	1340
The great victory at Crecy took place in	1346
Calais was taken in	1347
The Black Prince defeated King John of France at Poitiers,	1356
The Black Death swept away half the population in	1376
<hr/>	
Richard II. was a weak king.	
The men of Kent rose in rebellion in	1381
John Wycliffe translated the Bible in this reign.	
Richard was imprisoned and died in Pontefract Castle in	1399



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